

Gal 10 M.B.

THE
WORKS

OF THE

Most Reverend Father in GOD,

Sir WILLIAM DAWES, Bar^r.

Late Lord Archbishop of YORK.

Primate of *England* and Metropolitan.

CONTAINING

All that were publish'd by His GRACE
Himself.

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T O

THE HONOURABLE

Sir William Milner, Bart.

(One of the Representatives in Parliament
for the City of *T O R K.*)

THIS SECOND VOLUME

OF THE

MOST REVEREND AUTHOR'S

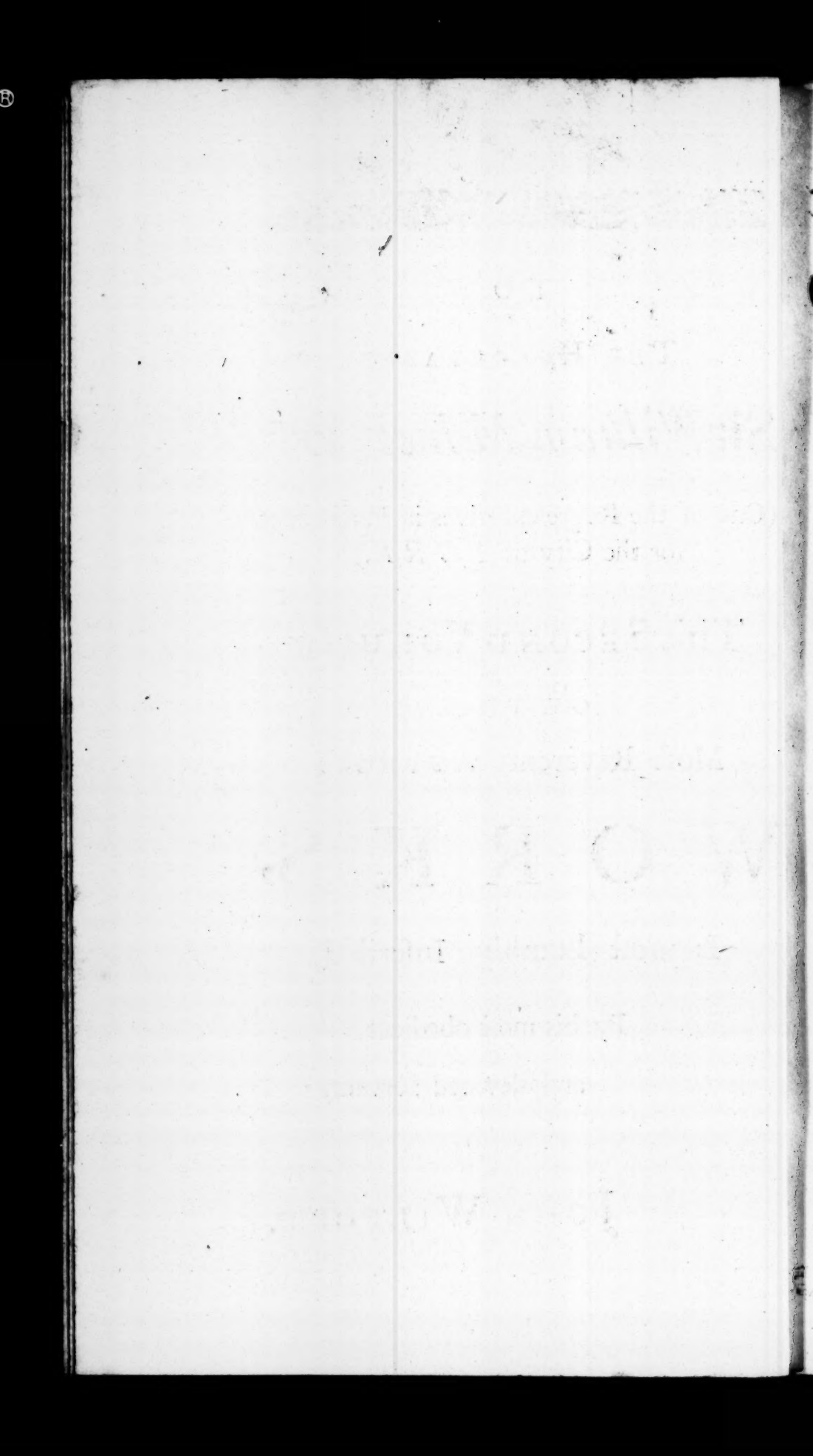
WORKS,

Is most humbly Inscrib'd,

By his most obedient

and devoted Servant,

J O H N W I L F O R D.



CONTENTS

OF THE

SECOND VOLUME.

SERMON I.

P*Reach'd before the Queen at St. James's,
March 3. 1702-3.*

The Pains and Terrors of a wounded Conscience insupportable.

PROV. xviii. 14. the latter Part of the Verse.

A wounded Spirit who can bear? Page 1

SERMON II. III.

Preach'd before King William at Hampton-Court, Novemb. 1699.

The Certainty of Hell-Torments from Principles of Nature and Reason.

MATTHEW xxv. 41.

Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels, p. 31. 64

SERMON IV.

Preach'd as before.

The Greatness of Hell-Torments.

On the same Text. — — — p. 98

S E R.

CONTENTS.

SERMON V.

*Preach'd before King William at Kensington,
Jan. 1701.*

The Eternity of Hell-Torments.

On the same Text. ——— pag. 133

SERMON VI.

The true Meaning of the Eternity of Hell-Torments.

On the same Text. ——— p. 168

SERMON VII.

The Objections against the Eternity of Hell-Torments, answer'd.

On the same Text. ——— p. 201

SERMON VIII.

Preach'd before her Majesty, when she was Princess of Denmark, at St. James's.

The Nature and Blessedness of Poverty of Spirit.

MATTHEW. 3.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ——— p. 236

SERMON IX.

Preach'd at St. James's in Lent, 1698.

Worldly Men wiser in their way, than Christians in theirs.

St. LUKE xvi. 8. *the latter part of the verse.
For the children of this world are, in their generation, wiser than the children of light.* p. 268

SERMON X.

*Preach'd before the Queen in Passion-week, 1702,
at St. James's.* Christ

CONTENTS.

Christ once offer'd, the Christians All-sufficient
Sacrifice.

H E B. ix. 26. the latter part of the verse.
*But now once, in the end of the world, hath he
appear'd to put away sin, by the sacrifice of him-
self.* — — — pag. 301

S E R M O N XI.

*Preach'd before the Queen, Novemb. 1703. at
St. James's.*

The desirableness of dying a righteous Man's
Death.

N U M B. xxiii. 10. the latter part of the verse.
*Let me dye the death of the righteous, and let my
last end be like his.* — — — P. 329

S E R M O N XII.

*Preach'd before the Queen, in Lent, 1704. at
St. James's.*

A good Conscience a Pledge of future Happiness.

I JOHN iii. 12.

*Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have
we confidence towards God.* P. 356

S E R M O N XIII.

*Preach'd before the Queen in Lent, 1705. at St.
James's.*

Faith's Victory over the World and its Temp-
tations.

I JOHN v. 4.

*For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the
world; and this is the victory that overcometh
the world, even our faith.* P. 388

S E R.

C O N T E N T S.

S E R M O N XIV.

Preach'd before the Queen, Nov. 1706. at St. James's.

The Danger of talking much, and wisdom of the contrary.

PROVERBS x. 19.

In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips, is wise. p. 420

S E R M O N XV.

Preach'd before the Queen, Nov. 1702. at St. James's.

The Friendship of the World Enmity with God.

JAMES iv. 4.

Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God. Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God. p. 450

S E R M O N XVI.

Preach'd before the Queen, Nov. 1704. St. James's.

The Nature and Necessity of a Christian Conversation.

PHILIP. i. 27. the former part of the verse.

Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ. — — P. 479

S E R M O N XVII.

Preach'd before the Queen, March 1711. at St. James's.

Of the right Use, and Abuse, of the Things of this World.

I COR. vii. 31.

And they that use this world, as not abusing it, for the fashion of this world passeth away. p. 509



S E R M O N I.

Preach'd before the QUEEN
at St. James's, March 3.
170²₃.

The Pains and Terrors of a wound-
ed Conscience insupportable.

PROVERBS XVIII. 14. the latter part
of the Verse.

A wounded spirit who can bear?



N discoursing upon these words,
I shall endeavour to shew,

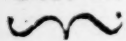
First, What we are to un-
derstand here by a *wounded*
spirit.

VOL. II.

B

Secondly,

The Pains and Terrors of a

Ser. I. *Secondly*, That such a *wounded spirit*  is indeed intolerable,

And then *Lastly*, I shall conclude with some practical reflections upon the whole.

First then, By a *wounded spirit*, or, as words should be render'd, a *troubled and afflicted spirit* or *mind*, it is plain we are not to understand a mind heavy laden and oppress'd with the common ill accidents and calamities of this life; such as come upon us, wholly without any fault of ours, either immediately and directly from the divine providence it self, or at least, by the permission of that, from some other inferior agent. And this not only because the *wounded spirit* in my text is oppos'd to all such evils (which are there call'd man's infirmity, that is, such

Job 5. 7. as are natural and common to man, *who is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards*) but also, because all afflictions and troubles of this kind, how sharp and grievous soever, are yet, as is there declar'd, really tolerable. The *spirit* or *mind* of man, or, as others would have it translated, a *manly* mind; a brave and generous soul fortifying and encouraging it self with some

some comfortable and heart'ning considerations of reason and religion (as that all such afflictions come from God, the just and wise and good creator, disposer and governour of all things; that they are sent by him, out of infinite love and kindness to us, to awaken us out of our sins, and to fright us from them, to reduce us to our duties, to try and quicken our graces and virtues, and by so doing, to prepare and qualify us for his favour; that they are always either proportioned by him to our strength, or, which is much at one, that our strength is assisted by his grace, and thereby made *sufficient* for them; that they cannot last long, to be sure, at the utmost, not longer than our lives; and that after death, if we bear them patiently and contentedly, and endeavour to reap those good fruits from them, which the divine providence design'd by them, we shall be rewarded for them with an *exceeding* and eternal weight of glory) will find it an easy matter to sustain it self under all these infirmities. And therefore,

Secondly, By a *wounded spirit* here, we are certainly to understand a mind

Sc. 1. labouring under the burthen and pressure
 of much worse evils, than any of these.
 And what can that be? but, either

First, a mind distracted and torn in pieces, by the violences of those *boistrous, turbulent* and *vexatious lusts* and *passions*, which we are too apt to beget, cherish, and blow up into a flame within our own breasts; such as *ambition, pride, avarice, revenge, malice, envy, anger, uncleanness*, and the rest of that *hellish* crew; which, whenever they singly, much more jointly, take possession of a man, destroy all his true peace and tranquillity of mind; and, by continually hurrying him on to new projects, for their gratification; plunging him in new difficulties, by their rashness; vexing and fretting him with their disappointments; pulling him different, nay perhaps contrary, ways to serve their various humours: and still, the more they are serv'd and obey'd, clamouring yet louder for service and obedience; harass and torment his soul, beyond all expression. Or,

Secondly, A mind sadly conscious to itself of an abominably wicked and ill-spent life; of its having been in a continued course of

of rebellion against the laws of its own Ser. 1.
reason, and the yet infinitely more perfect
one of an all-wise and all-good God; and
of having thereby brought it self, not on-
ly under its own dislike and hatred, but
also under the most severe and dreadful
curse of God; within the verge of hell,
and almost within the feeling of those in-
conceivable torments, which are there
prepared for the devil and his angels. Matt. 25.
41.

And this is that *wounded spirit*, which
I intend now solely to insist upon. And,
that I may not seem to some men to talk
only of a chimæra of my own making, I
shall beg leave to observe how frequently
the very heathens themselves (whose au-
thority, it is to be hoped, will pass with
our admirers of reason and natural reli-
gion, free and unquestion'd) speak of such
a *wounded spirit* as this, in their writings;
telling us over and over, * *That so great* * Tull. O-
is the power of conscience, that those, who rat. pro
have committed any fault, live in perpe- Milone.
tual fear of punishment; † That many † Plutarch
sorrows and perturbations of mind, re- pag. 556.
pentance and continual tumults and dis- Edit. Paris.
orders, diffidence concerning even their
present state, and black and melancholy
B 3 sus-

Ser. I. *suspensions of their future ones, are the natural consequences of mens evil actions.*

* Senec. * *That in proportion to mens sins, their*
 Ep. 97, 98. *fears will grow upon them, and never*
 105. *let them be quiet; that for these, they*
will be scourged and mightily tormented.

† Juvenal. † *And lastly, That they night and day*
 Sat. 13. *carry about in their own breasts a wit-*
ness against themselves, which doth se-
cretly terrify, lash and torture them,
and fill them with dreadful apprehensions

|| Lib. 1. *of punishments to come.* Nay even || Lu-
 Lib. 3. *cretius himself doth, more than once,*
 acknowledge this to be the common case
 of mankind, even while he blameth them
 for it, and supposeth their fears, upon this
 account to be altogether childish and un-
 reasonable, without the least ground or
 foundation in nature, and the pure ef-
 fects of fancy or education.

But surely, with his good leave, it is
 much more likely, that such universal
 fears, as he himself confesseth these to be,
 should proceed from some fix'd and uni-
 form principle of nature or reason, com-
 mon to all mankind, than from the un-
 settled and perpetually varying ones of
 fancy and education; and consequently it
 must

must be allow'd to be highly probable at Ser. 1. least, that these fears have some real object existing in nature to answer them, as all other such universal affections of our minds are generally deem'd to have. And indeed, without supposing that they have so, I cannot possibly see what one wise or good end can be promoted by these fears; and if so, humane nature must needs appear to be a very odd and unaccountable thing, having these fears, as certain seeds of misery, sown in it, without any other reason, or for any other end or purpose, than purely to make it miserable. Which, how consistent soever it may be with the notion of a world huddled together by chance (as indeed any thing, how odd soever, may consist with that) yet it can never be reconcil'd to the notion of an all-wise and all-good God, who created mankind, and implanted these fears in them.

Besides, let wicked men pretend what they will, since, on the one hand, it is absolutely impossible for them to demonstrate, that there will be no such thing as a state of future punishment for the wicked; and since, on the other hand, it

Ser. 1. cannot be deny'd but that there are a great many, at least probable, arguments that there will be such a state; there must ever be just and reasonable grounds for these fears and mis-givings of conscience; there must ever be (all things consider'd) not from fancy or education, but from natural and rational conviction, distrusts, jealousies and fore bodings upon our minds, of a dreadful state of punishment, to follow and do justice upon an habitual state of sin.

And thus much I thought necessary to premise, in order to engage the attention even of mere natural men, if any such there be here, to the following part of my discourse; by shewing them briefly (tho' I doubt not but that they have full, very full, evidence of this within their own breasts; if they would be so honest and ingenuous as to speak the truth) even from the acknowledgments of the best and wisest of their own heathen friends, and from the very dictates of that nature and reason, which they pretend so strictly to follow and obey, that there is, there must be, such a *wounded spirit* as we are now discoursing of. And, having
done

done this, I shall the more cheerfully proceed. Ser. r.

Secondly, To prove that such a *wounded spirit* is indeed intolerable. And this, I hope, I shall be able to make very plain, both from *reason* and *experience*.

First, From *reason*, which seems readily to admit these two things.

First, That a *wounded spirit* is the greatest evil or affliction, that can possibly befall us in this life.

Secondly, That there is no assistance any where to be had, to enable us to support our selves under it: but, on the contrary, all those things which us'd to administer comfort to us under our other afflictions, turn powerfully against us, and mightily help to encrease this.

First, That a *wounded spirit* is the greatest evil or affliction, that can possibly befall us in this life. There are no afflictions so sharp and pungent as those, which do most immediately affect our most sensible and tender part, the mind: and nothing sure can affect that, like the lashes of our own reason and conscience, like the dread of an offended God, and the imminent danger of falling into infinite and ever-

Ser. 1. everlasting torments. It is no small uneasiness to a man, to be unable to approve and justify himself to his own mind, and to lie under a sentence of condemnation from his own reason; but it is an uneasiness, above all uneasinesses, to lie under the apprehension, much more the certain expectation of God's wrath: nay, and of that fiercest and hottest wrath too, which he has laid up in store for the ungodly, against the great and terrible *day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God*. This wrath doth so infinitely transcend and surpass all other the dispensations of God's wrath against sinners in this world; that the very fears of this must needs be a great deal more terrible and grievous, than the actual feeling of those. Besides, there is this aggravating circumstance peculiar to a *wounded spirit*, that, while all other afflictions grow easier and lighter by continuance, and by degrees wear off and decline towards an end, this alone is always increasing; because always coming nearer and nearer to that, which, though an end to all other afflictions, is the beginning of such an additional load to this, as it makes
me

me even tremble to think of. To all Ser. I.
which add, that this is such an affliction
as brings all other afflictions along with
it: for a *broken spirit*, as *Solomon* observes, *Prov. 17.*
drieth the bones, that, is destroyeth our ^{22.}
health, spoils our taste of every thing that
is good and pleasant, and, like a secret fire
within us, is continually preying upon and
devouring us.

Farther yet, it is not to be doubted
but that, besides the nature of the thing
it self, God doth, in judgment, widen
and enlarge this wound, upon the *spirits*
of sinners, and, as the prophet *Jeremiah*
expresseth it, *add grief to their sorrow*; *Jer. 45. 3.*
by withdrawing the comfortable presence
of his *holy spirit* from them, quickening
their sense of their guilt, representing to
them, in an extraordinary manner, the
danger of their condition, giving them a
plainer sight and apprehension of the tor-
ments of hell, and thereby bringing them,
as it were, nearer to them. All this, as it
is very agreeable to reason to suppose of
God, after he has been, beyond all mea-
sure, affronted and exasperated by sinners;
so is it exactly consistent with his way of
dealing with obstinate sinners, in all other
cases,

Ser. 1. cases, which is to add to those mischiefs
 which they have willingly brought upon
Iai. 6. 10. themselves; *stopping the ears*, and *hardning*
the hearts of those, who would not *hear*
 when he call'd, nor *relent* when he pu-
Rom. 1. 18. nish'd: *giving those up to a reprobate*
mind, who did not like to retain him in
2 Th. 2. 11. *their knowledge*; and *sending strong de-*
lusions on them, who received not the
love of the truth, that they should be-
lieve a lie. And moreover it is expressly
 said of *Saul*, when he was under grief
 and trouble of mind, upon account of his
1 Sam. 16. 14. having disobey'd and provok'd God, *that*
the spirit of the Lord had departed from
him, and *an evil spirit from the Lord*
troubled, or, as it is in the margin, *ter-*
rified him.

Well then might the son of *Sirach*
Eccles. 25. 13. pray, *Give me any plague, but the plague*
of the heart, and well may we cry out,
Lib. 3. offic. cap. 4. with *St. Ambrose*, *What pain is more grie-*
vous than that of a wounded conscience!
is not this rather to be avoided, than
weakness, than poverty, than banishment,
nay than death itself? And with *St. Au-*
In Ps. 45. *stin*, among all the troubles and afflictions
of the mind of man, there is none great-
 er

er than that of a guilty conscience. And Ser. 1.
yet, as great, as unspeakably great as this
affliction is, there is still one terrible and
inflaming circumstance of it behind, and
that is,

Secondly, That there is no assistance
any where to be had, to enable us to sup-
port ourselves under it; but on the con-
trary, all those things, which us'd to ad-
minister comfort to us, under our other
afflictions, turn powerfully against us, and
mightily help to increase this. How great
soever our afflictions or sufferings are in
themselves, yet so long as we are any way
assisted with succours and supports, in pro-
portion to their greatness, be it what it
will, they are still tolerable. But when
an exceeding, and more than ordinarily
heavy burden is laid upon us, and we have
not only no new additional strength and
assistance communicated to us, but have
even our own ordinary strength and abi-
lities very much impair'd, nay, perhaps
quite taken away, it must needs be im-
possible for us to stand under it. And
this alas! is the misery of our present
case. Our burthen, as you have seen, is
beyond all conception great; and yet,
wherever

Ser. 1. where-ever we turn our eyes, whether within to our selves, or without to others, we shall not be able to find any thing, to give us the least help or support under it.

If we look into ourselves, and consult first, as is most natural, our own reason, for aid: that cannot but own the justice of the divine vengeance, lay the torments we feel at our own doors, and read our sentence of condemnation again to us, with an *higher voice*. So far will that be from giving us any comfort, that it will continually upbraid, reproach and give us new lashes for our folly; so far from mitigating and asswaging our sorrows, that it will continually increase both the pains which we already feel, and our fears and expectations of more and greater,

Well then, let us try to rally our *natural courage*, and see what assistance we can have from that; but alas! there is hardly any such thing as natural courage left to a man in this case. For wickedness, condemn'd by her own witness, is very timorous, and being press'd with conscience, always forecasteth grievous things; and, what between their sufferings

wisd. 17.
11.

ings and their fears, the buffetings of Ser. 1.
their own reason and conscience, and the ^{Job 6. 4.} terrors of God set in array against them,
the stout-hearted are spoil'd, their spirits
quite broken, and the strong men bow
themselves

Nor is this the worst of that neither:
But, as philosophers observe that *corruption of the best things is worst*, and, as
the most healthy constitutions bear sickness worst; so here, the greater our natural courage and sprightliness us'd to be, the greater will our dejection and uneasiness now prove: the higher and faster our spirits us'd to run, the more sensibly shall we now feel this cruel damp and check upon them.

But are those without us no better able to assist us than we are ourselves? Can our friends, who have help'd to support us under so many and great afflictions, do us no good in this? Vain creatures! what friends can we think will be able to save us from the inward scourgings of our own minds: to skreen us from God's wrath, and keep off the *arrows of his vengeance* from us? What medicines can our friends bring to heal our wounded minds with,
but

Ser. 1. but reasonings and arguments? and with
 ~~~~~ what arguments shall they plead for us,  
 like those with which we plead against  
 our selves? What one topic of comfort  
 have they left in store, to pour like balm,  
 into the deep and ghastly wounds of such  
 a troubled spirit? will they not rather,  
 like *Job's* friends, tho' with much more  
 reason, *heap up words against us, and*  
*shake their heads at us?*

Could they indeed, as it is pretended  
 the church of *Rome* can, out of their  
 treasury and over-stock of good works,  
 supply us; and, by so doing, make us as  
 truly righteous in God's sight, as if they  
 had been our own; this, tho' it would  
 not support us under a *wounded spirit*,  
 yet would take away the cause of it, and  
 by that means remove it from us. But  
 alas! we never had but one friend in the  
 world, who was able, in the least, to  
 plead any merits that could be availa-  
 ble for us; and him we have made our  
 enemy.

But has our old friend, the devil, no  
 comfort or support for us? Oh no! All  
 that ever he was able to do, to support  
 us against these terrors, was, by lyes and  
 false



false glosses, by sophistry and artifice, to Ser. I. make us doubt of the reality of them, or else make us impute them to some such cause, as should take away the dreadful-ness of them. But these shifts will serve now no more; for too plainly we feel them, to be able to doubt of the reality of them; too clear an account we see of them, in God's justice and threatnings, to leave room to dispute about the cause of them. Besides, even in this sense, *Grea-<sup>1 John 4.4.</sup>ter is he that is in us, than he that is in the world;* our own awaken'd consciences, and the hand of God within us, are an over-match for the devil, and defy all his wiles and stratagems, all his strength and power, how many and great soever. Nay, so refin'd and unprejudic'd are our understandings now become, that there is nothing clearer to us, than that the devil himself did all, that in spite and malice he could, to bring us into this woful condition; and therefore, tho' he were able, is not to be rely'd upon for help in it. Nay farther, it is now very plain to us, that the devil himself is in our very case, and yet cannot help himself; and, if he cannot keep himself from *trembling at James 2.*

Ser. I. the thoughts of his own condition, in  
 ~~~~~ vain must it be to expect that he should  
 inspire us with courage enough, not to
tremble at ours. No, the thoughts of his
trembling must necessarily increase ours:
 his inability to help himself must needs
 spoil all our hope and confidence in him.

Still perhaps it will be pretended, that
 a dose of physick, or of wine, good company,
 exercise, or diversion, will give us
 certain ease, and free us from these troublesome
 terrors of our own minds. And, supposing
 that they could do so, yet what is this to the
 purpose? We are not talking of getting rid
 of them (for that no doubt may easily be
 done, for a time, by a sufficient dose of any
 opiate or strong liquor, or any other way of
 rendring us insensible; nay, it is to be hop'd,
 generally speaking, that it may be done, for
 ever, in a much better way, by repentance and
 a thorough reformation of heart and life) but
 we are talking of maintaining and supporting
 our selves, of keeping ourselves from sinking
 and desponding, of bearing up with any
 measure of cheerfulness and courage, while
 we are awake and in our right senses, and
 under the actual

tual sting and smart of them. This is to Ser. r.
bear afflictions, the other only to seek hid-
ing places from them; and what will all
the physick, wine, good company, exer-
cise or diversion in the world help to-
wards this? what manner of relation or
dependance, in the least, is there between
those, which are burdens purely spiritual
and these which are helps purely corporal?
As well might we hope to support a
wounded spirit, by giving it a staff to
rest upon, as by such unsuitable and use-
less helps as these. Besides, give me leave
to tell you that these ways of stifling and
lulling asleep distempers, of the mind as
well as of the body, are but meer cheats
and impositions upon ourselves, and in the
end, only tend to encrease and enflame
the violence of our distempers: and to make
them, like latent fires not thoroughly extin-
guish'd, burn but the more fiercely, when
they break out and get head next.

What then shall we do, whither shall
we go, or to whom shall we fly, for help?
Of whom shall we seek for succour, but of
thee, *O Father of mercies, and God of all* ^{2 Cor. 1, 3}
comfort? When our own reason and strength
have fail'd us, when our *fathers and mo-*

Ser. I. *thers have forsaken us*, when all the powers of the world (except thine own) could help us no longer, then hast thou been wont to *take us up*. To thee therefore let us come, and cry for mercy. But oh unhappy state! we dare not so much as lift up our eyes towards heaven, whence we can expect nothing, but dreadful flashes of vengeance and *fiery indignation*. The very name of God, which us'd to be so comfortable to us, in all our other afflictions, is now become one of our greatest torments in this, and those kind and pleasing appellations of *Father* and *Saviour*, are turn'd into those severe affrightned ones, of *Judge* and *Avenger*. We have provok'd God beyond all measure, his *wrath is waxen hot* against us, and we cannot reasonably look for any thing else, but that it should break out in plagues and bitterest judgments upon us. For he is a God that *hateth all workers of iniquity, he will not pity nor spare, nor have mercy upon the ungodly*: but he will *rain upon them snares, fire and brimstone and a burning tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup*.

Oh dreadful state! unutterable torments! beyond, infinitely beyond, our strength, yet destitute

destitute even of the least support! ne- Ser. 1.
ver so much need of succour, never so lit-
tle of it! Our reason and religion perse-
cute us; our natural courage fails us; our
friends stand by and cannot help us, nay
what's worse, condemn us: the devil nei-
ther will, nor indeed can assist us: and
which is yet infinitely worse (oh how shall
we bear to hear it!) our God himself, who
us'd to be our certain friend and helper,
is now become our most bitter and im-
placable enemy, and daily throws new
loads of sorrow upon us.

And, if all this be not sufficient to con-
vince men of the insupportableness of a
wounded conscience (as in such a case as
this, where men are unwilling to be con-
vinc'd, who can tell what is sufficient?)
you may be pleased to take for farther
confirmation,

Secondly, The proof of experience; and
if you want this (I mean, if you have ne-
ver had it within your own breasts: if,
from the lesser fears, disquietudes and un-
easinesses, which the commission of one, or
but few sins, have there enkindled, you
are not able to judge of the intolerable-
ness of those torments, which are the ef-

Ser. 1. fects of a long and habitual course of sin)

you may soon have it, by taking a short view of those miserable wretches, especially upon their sick and dying beds, who are *possess'd* with this *legion of devils*, a wounded spirit. Some of which you may behold, in still and sullen silence, by their dreadful, sad, ghastly, desponding looks, discovering pains, too great to be express'd, flaming and raging in their inmost souls. Others, in sudden fits and starts, crying out, groaning, shrieking and complaining of torments that as much transcend all those, which human art or malice ever could invent, as they do the most common and most easy and gentle pains of nature. Others, in agonies and unintermitting torments, even in their sleep (if it may deserve that name) as well as when awake, roaring out death, hell, damnation and eternity, and cursing both themselves and their false friends, who cheated them into this sad and deplorable condition. Others again ready to burst with inward grief, and incapable of any the least ease, till they have accused themselves of such crimes, as they know certainly a most ignominious and painful death will follow

follow. And *Lastly*, Others, still more Ser. 1.
desperate than the rest, not able in any
measure to sustain their weighty load of
guilt and woe, laying violent hands up-
on themselves, and choosing rather to run
the hazard even of hell itself, in another
world, than to bear the lashes of a guilty
conscience, in this.

All this I could yet farther illustrate and
confirm to you, from various examples of
people of all sorts; (not even princes and
the greatest of men themselves excepted.)
As from those, in scripture, of *Cain*, whose
consciousness of his guilt, in shedding his
brother's blood, and of the provocation
which he had thereby given to divine ven-
geance, made him even weary of his life,
and afraid that every body, that should
find him, would kill him; of *Saul*, who, Genes. 4.
being admonish'd by the prophet *Samuel* 13. 14.
of his *disobedience* towards God, and of 1 Sam. ch.
15, 16, &c.
God's *rejection* of him thereupon, never
after could enjoy any true ease and
peace of mind, but liv'd in continual grief
and anguish of soul, *like the troubled sea*, Is. 59. 2a.
*when it cannot rest, whose waters cast
up mire and dirt*, as *Isaiah* elegantly de-
scribeth the condition of *wicked men*; of

Ser. 1. *Belshazzar*, who, when the hand-writing upon the wall put him in mind of his impious and abominable life, had his countenance chang'd, and his thoughts troubled him so, that the joynts of his loyns were loos'd, and his knees smote one against another; of *Herod*, whose sense of his baseness and injustice, in putting *John the Baptist* to death, had fill'd him with such fears, jealousies and suspicions, that, as soon as ever he heard of the miracles done by our Saviour, he presently concluded that *John the Baptist* was risen from the dead, and was greatly perplex'd with the apprehensions of what was likely to befall him for his wickedness; and lastly, of *Judas*, whose trouble and remorse, upon account of his having betray'd his master, were so great, that not being able to bear them, he became his own executioner, and soon put an end to a miserable and insupportable life. From those of *Tiberius*, *Caligula*, *Nero*, *Orestes*, *Oedipus* and *Alcmaeon* taken out of prophane history, who were all tortur'd by the furies, as the heathens lov'd to speak (that is, as * *Tully* very honestly explains it, by their own evil consciences) to that degree, that

Dan. 5. 6.

him so, that the joynts of his loyns were

loos'd, and his knees smote one against a-

nother; of Herod, whose sense of his base-

ness and injustice, in putting John the

Baptist to death, had fill'd him with such

fears, jealousies and suspicions, that, as

soon as ever he heard of the miracles done

by our Saviour, he presently concluded

that John the Baptist was risen from

the dead, and was greatly perplex'd with

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of Judas, whose trouble and remorse, up-

on account of his having betray'd his

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ble and insupportable life. From those of

Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, Orestes, Oedi-

pus and Alcmaeon taken out of prophane

history, who were all tortur'd by the fu-

ries, as the heathens lov'd to speak (that

*is, as * Tully very honestly explains it, by*

their own evil consciences) to that degree,

that

Matt. 27.

5:

** Lib. 1.*

de leg.

Suet. vit.

Tib. cap.

67.

Id. vit. Ca-

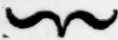
lig. cap 51.

Id. vit.

Ner. cap.

31

that they were like men distracted, not Ser. 1.
 knowing what to do, or whither to turn ^{Sophocl.}
 themselves for ease; fearful of thunder and ^{Elec. Id.}
 lightning, as if they had been the bellow- ^{Oedip.}
 ings and flashes of hell it self; seeming ^{Ovid Met.}
 to themselves to be haunted perpetually lib. 9.
 by the ghosts of those whom they had
 injur'd; nay, sometimes tormented even
 into real distraction; committing the
 most horrid outrages upon themselves,
 tearing out their own eyes, and making
 frequent attempts upon themselves, always
 weary of life, and yet when they were
 capable of any reflection, fearful to the ut-
 most of death. As also from the more
 modern and very remarkable instance of
Francis Spira in Germany; and above all, ^{Sleidan.}
 from the dying confession of a noble and ^{Hist. Ref.}
 illustrious penitent of our own nation, ^{Fol. 21.}
 who declared (and oh! that his words may
 sink deep into our hearts!) that his for-
 row for his sins was *a most penetrating* ^{Bp. Bur-}
and cutting sorrow: so that, though in ^{net's Life}
his body he suffer'd extreme pain for some ^{of Lord}
weeks, yet the agonies of his mind some- ^{Rock-ster,}
times swallow'd up the sense of what he ^{p. 128,}
felt in his body; and that, tho' there ^{129.}
were nothing to come after this life, yet
all

Ser. 1. all the pleasures he had ever known in
 *sin (and he had known as many, as most men that ever liv'd) were not worth that torture he had felt in his mind. But I hope that what has been already said upon this head, has been sufficient; and, I fear, the time and your patience call earnestly upon me to hasten in the*

Last place, to conclude with some practical reflections, upon what has been already said: And this, with all possible brevity.

Hence then we learn that the greatest evils of this life are brought by men upon themselves, and ought not therefore to be charged upon God. What affliction have we comparable, for the sting and smart of it, to that of a wounded conscience? And, next to that, to that of a mind ruffled and disordered with lusts and passions; and whence come these, but from our own sin and folly?

Hence also it plainly appears, that there is such a thing, as an essential difference between what we call moral good and evil: Our own reason and conscience, and the divine providence it self, inwardly commanding, applauding and rewarding
 that;

that; while, on the other hand, they do Ser. 1.
secretly forbid, condemn and punish this. ~~~~~

Hence likewise we have an evident proof, both that there will certainly be future punishments for the wicked, and that they will be very great. There will be an hell; else why has nature implanted fears of it in our minds? The torments of it, we may be sure, will be very great; else how comes it to pass that the foretastes of them are so, even in this world, which is not the proper place for finishing and consummating the torments of the wicked?

Hence too we may draw an argument for the vindication of God's providence, in part, in respect of the worldly prosperity of wicked men; for, tho' they may outwardly seem to succeed and live at ease in the eye of the world: yet, so long as it is frequently their case, *to have terrors* Job 20.25,
upon them, darkness hid in their secret 26.
places, and a fire not blown consuming them (as *Zophar* elegantly describes the condition of wicked men) this must needs be a mighty damp and fowring to all their enjoyments, and make them, upon the whole, not those very happy men that they are too apt to pass with us for.

In

Ser. I. In a word, hence it appears what a very foolish and dangerous thing a life of sin is: which, both in its own nature, and thro' the just judgment of God, tends to bring upon us continual uneasinesses, grief and anxiety of mind here; and these too, as a sure and infallible pledge of much greater torments hereafter. As also what a barbarous and cruel thing it is, to entice and draw in other men, more especially our friends, to an habitual course of sinning. Can any man deserve the name of a friend from him, whom he would persuade, and even constrain to do such things, as would certainly give him a fit of the stone or strangury? Much less can he from him, whom he would engage in doing of that, which must necessarily bring him under the pangs and lashes of a guilty mind, to which those compar'd are even as nothing.

To conclude all: Hence we learn both of what importance it is to us to preserve our minds and consciences pure and undisturb'd; or, at least, if we have been so unhappy as to wound them, to get them heal'd again as fast as ever we can: and likewise, what is the best and speediest way

way of doing this. Since the torments of Ser. 1.
a *wounded spirit* are so great, as has been
prov'd, it is impossible, if we consider
them, but that we should be afraid of
them, and do our utmost towards keep-
ing our selves clear of them. Since the
pain of it is so intolerable, when we are
under it, we must not love our selves and
our own ease, if we do not make all the
haste we possibly can to get rid of it; get
rid of it, I say, for bear it we cannot.
The wisest and easiest way, no doubt, is
to be careful to keep clear of the tor-
ments, from the beginning: And this can
only be done, by keeping clear, as far as
we are able, of all sins, which are, as you
have seen, the certain seeds of them.

*Would you never be afflicted in mind, ^{Under.}
live well: Would you be secure, do no ^{Seneca.}
evil.* Or rather, to speak in the words of
the apostle, *Wouldst thou not be afraid of
thy conscience, do that which is good,
and thou shalt have praise of the same.*

But, if thou art already entangled and be-
set with these torments, and wantest to
get rid of them; get but rid of thy sins,
which are the sting of them, and they
shall wound thee no more. And there is
but

Ser. 1. but one way of doing this, and that is, *by repentance, and turning of our selves to God. This, through the mercies of God in Christ Jesus, shall blot out all our sins, and consequently put an end to our pain, take away our guilt, and with that our punishment. Then shall God give us rest from our sorrow, nay even turn it into joy. His holy Spirit will then again vouchsafe to take up his abode with us, and to fill us with his blessed fruits of love, joy, peace, &c. and to heal us and give us strong consolation, now that we have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us. Amend your lives therefore, and turn, that your sins may be put away, and that the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.*





S E R M O N II.

Preach'd before King *William*
at *Hampton-Court*, *Novemb.*
1699.

The Certainty of Hell-Torments
from Principles of Nature and
Reason.

MATTHEW XXV. 41.

*Then shall he say unto them on the
left hand, depart from me, ye curs-
ed, into everlasting fire, prepared
for the devil and his angels.*



THESE words, which are part
of our Saviour's own description
of the last judgment, and con-
tain in them that most dreadful
sentence, which shall then be pronounced
upon

Ser. 1. upon all the *workers of iniquity*, do very naturally lead me to treat of the *certain-ty, greatness and eternity of hell-torments*; the *first* of which is imply'd in those words, *Then shall he, Christ, the judge of the world, say unto them on the left hand, the wicked, depart from me, ye cursed, &c. the second, in those, depart from me, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels; and the third and last in the word everlasting.*

And I hope I shall not be thought tedious, if I discourse somewhat largely (tho' with all convenient brevity) upon these points; which are points of the highest moment and importance to religion and the souls of men; as being motives which have a much surer and more powerful influence over the minds and actions of men, and which more effectually tend to reduce them from their sinful courses, and to engage and confirm them in contrary habits of piety and virtue, than any other whatsoever. Nay, even than the joys of heaven it self; it being but too too plain from experience, that it is very much owing to the fears of hell, that men are at all the pains

pains of qualifying themselves for the Ser. 2.
joys of heaven; and that far greater num-
bers are aw'd and frighten'd into their
duty by the dread of that, than allur'd
and perswaded to it by the hope of this.

First then, let us consider the *certainty*
of *hell-torments*, or the assurance which
we have that there will be a *place of tor-* Luke 16:
ment, for the wicked, in another life. 28.

And this is so plainly asserted almost in
every page of the gospel; that it is ut-
terly impossible that a true christian, who
sincerely believes that to contain the mind
and will of God, should have any the
least doubt of it. Nay, to such an one,
the words of my text singly (proceeding
from our Saviour's own mouth, and being so
clear and express, as they are, in this mat-
ter) must needs give abundant conviction.

But because (such is the unhappiness of
our times!) we live in an age, when many,
even of those who call themselves chris-
tians, will not be satisfy'd with scripture
evidence; but cry out aloud for proofs
from nature and reason, and profess them-
selves entirely willing to submit and re-
sign up themselves to these; I shall, in
condescension to these mens demands, tho'

Ser. 2. very *unreasonable* ones coming out of their
 ~~~~~ mouths (that so we may manifest our ear-

1 Cor. 9.

20, 22.

Rom. 1.

20.

nest desire, by *any means* to gain them;  
 that we may, if not *convince*, yet leave  
 them *without excuse*; and above all, that  
 we may do justice to the christian religion,  
 by shewing what an exact harmony there  
 is between that and the principles of na-  
 ture and reason) at present wholly argue  
 from such proofs; and, from mens com-  
 mon fears and apprehensions of future pu-  
 nishments, their general consent to, and  
 acknowledgment of them, and the reason-  
 ableness of the thing it self, endeavour to  
 make it unexceptionably plain, to all un-  
 prejudic'd persons, that, in the final issue  
 and event of things, it must *necessarily*  
 Ps. 9. 17. so be, that *the wicked shall be turn'd*  
*into hell, and all the nations that forget*  
*God.*

The first thing that comes under our  
 consideration is, the common fears and ap-  
 prehensions of mankind as to future pu-  
 nishments. But having, as I hope, suf-  
 ficiently prov'd these in my foregoing dis-  
 course, I shall presume that I may be ex-  
 cus'd from insisting any farther upon the  
 proof of them here; especially consider-  
 ing

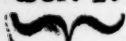
ing, that what I have there said will receive mighty confirmation, and be no longer disputed, if there be any force in what I am now about to say. Ser. 2.

*Secondly*, Concerning the general consent and acknowledgment of mankind, as to future punishments, and that we may go on, in our consideration of these, with all possible clearness; I shall

*First*, make proof of the matter of fact here alledg'd, That there have ever been such a general consent and acknowledgment of mankind, as to *future punishments*. And

*Secondly*, Shew how this proves the certainty of them?

*First*, I am to make proof of the matter of fact here alledg'd, that there have ever been such a general consent and acknowledgment of mankind, as to *future punishments*. And how can I do this better? than by beginning with the most ancient nations of the world, of which we have any account either in sacred or prophane history, and shewing down from them even to their own times (as far as the glimmering light of antiquity will enable me, and the limits of my present dis-

 Ser. 2. course permit) plain footsteps of such a consent and acknowledgment; and that too more especially among those nations, which have been most remarkably distinguish'd, above others, by their politeness and civility, their improvements in arts and sciences, and their discreet use and exercise of their rational faculties.

And *first*, as to sacred history; tho' it cannot certainly be collected from thence, what was the belief of the descendants of *Adam*, from the time of his fall to the settling of the *Jewish* nation, as to this point; yet it is well known, that

Selden, de  
jure Nat.  
& Gent.  
juxta di-  
scipl. E-  
braeorum.  
l. 7. c. 4.

there is a very ancient tradition among the *Jews*, concerning *Abel's* belief of it, and the offence which he gave to his brother *Cain*, by his profession of such his belief; which was, as the tradition saith, the occasion of *Cain's* falling upon him and slaying him. And the early institution of sacrifices, to please and appease God, seems to make it plain, that the men of the first ages of the world had a general notion of God's being a *rewarder of them that diligently seek him*, and, on the contrary, a *punisher of those that neglect to obey him*. And this general notion



notion, join'd with their own experience, Ser. 2.  
that God did not always reward the good and  
punish the bad in this world (which was re-  
markably manifest, almost from the very be-  
ginning of the world, in the case of *Cain* and  
*Abel*) must surely have led them on to  
conclude, that he would do it in another.  
Besides, they had so many sensible de-  
monstrations of God's observing the be-  
haviour of men, and that too with a de-  
sign to reward or punish them accord-  
ing to their deserts (on the one side, in  
his extraordinary care of good men, as  
*Noah*, *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and more espe-  
cially *Enoch*, whom he took alive out of  
this world to himself, and by so doing,  
made him a sure proof of a future life,  
and state of happiness for good men; and,  
on the other side, in his extraordinary  
judgments upon sinners, as in the destruc-  
tion of the old world by the deluge, in  
the confounding and scattering the builders  
of *Babel*, and more particularly in the  
*raining down fire and brimstone upon*  
*Sodom and Gomorrah*, and thereby, as it  
were, shewing men a specimen of that  
lake of *fire and brimstone*, which he had  
prepared for the wicked in another life)

Ser. 2. that we have all the reason in the world  
 ~~~~~ to believe, that they had no manner of  
 doubt, as to this point.

Vid. Bp. Pearson on the article of life everlasting. Windet de vita functorum statu, Sect. 7, 8, 9. Menasseh Ben Isra-el, de creatione. Probl. 19. And then as to the *Jews*, it is undeniably evident from their *Talmud* and *Targums*, as well as from the particular acknowledgments of the *ancientest* and most learned of their *Rabbins*, that they did explicitly believe an *hell*, or *place of torments*, for the wicked, in another life. And accordingly we find *Eleazar*, one of the *principal scribes of the Jews*, an *aged man*, and *discreet*, when he was advis'd by his friends to make as if he did eat of the *flesh*, taken from the sacrifice commanded by the king, that in so doing he might be delivered from death, with great scorn rejecting their advice upon this consideration; that, though for the present time he should be delivered from the punishment of men, yet should he not escape the hand of the *Almighty*, either alive or dead. And the son of *Sirach* tells us, that *sinner*s are kept against the mighty day of their punishment. And the author of the book of *Wisdom*, that horrible is the end of the *unrighteous generation*; that when they cast up their accounts of their sins,

2 Maccab.
6. 26.

Eccles. 12.
6.

Wisdom 3.
19.
4. 20.
12. 26.

from Principles of Nature and Reason. 39

sins, they shall come with fear, and shall Ser. 2.
feel a judgment worthy of God. And the
seven brethren, mention'd in the *Macca-* 2 *Maccab.*
bes, were plainly full of the belief of a ^{c. 7.}
state of future retribution. And our Sa-
viour, we find in the New Testament, fre- Matt. 5.
quently talk'd to the Jews of hell, as of ^{29, 30.}
a place, the notion of which they were ^{Mark 9.}
^{43. 45. 47.}
well acquainted with: and they never ob-
jected against, or seem'd to have been sur-
priz'd at, his so doing. And *Celsus* makes ^{Orig. cont.}
his *Jew* tell the christians that, as to the ^{Cels. p.}
rewards of good men, and punishments by ^{60, 61.}
fire for the bad in another life, they teach
nothing new to the *Jews*, in that. And
it is well known that the present *Jews* ^{Maimon.}
make the belief of future punishments a ^{de funda-}
necessary article of their creed: and this, ^{mento le-}
^{gis.}
no doubt, as they think, who are very te-
nacious of the traditions of their forefa- ^{De Veil.}
thers, exactly agreeable to the sentiments ^{Catechif.}
and profess'd acknowledgments of their ^{Judæo-}
^{rum, p. 12.}
forefathers, in this matter.

I have but one thing more to observe
to you, out of sacred history; and that is,
that there is mention there made of *sacri-* Ps. 106. 28.
fices of the dead, which were offer'd by
the worshippers of *Baal-peor*. By which

Ser. 2. *sacrifices of the dead* some learned men suppose we are to understand sacrifices offer'd to the infernal Gods, for the sake of the dead, or to incline the infernal gods to be merciful to the dead. And, if so, we have here a very ancient proof of the belief of *future punishments*, in the heathen world.

v. Selden.
de Diis
Syris. p.
164, &c.
Poli Syn.
in loc.

v. Jac.
Phil. Tho-
malin. c.
de Voris
Diis Ma-
nibus ob-
latis; &
Jacob. Gu-
ther. c. 11.
de Inferis
& c. 12. de
precibus,
quæ in
mortuo-
rum me-
moriam
fundeban-
tur.

Secondly, As to prophane history: the *Phenicians* and *Egyptians* (the most ancient people which we have any account of in that) had some such rites in relation to their dead, as seem evidently to testify their belief of *future punishments* for the wicked. Such were their $\chi\alpha\iota$, which were not only offerings to the ghosts of their departed friends, to appease and gratify them; but likewise sacrifices to the infernal gods, join'd with prayers to them, that they would be kind and propitious to their departed friends. And thus much *Plutarch* seems to intimate, when, in his consolatory letter to his wife, upon the death of his little daughter, he tells her, that there was no need of these $\chi\alpha\iota$ upon her account, because *it was generally agreed that such young children went out of this world to a better and a diviner state.*

Besides

Besides, we know very well that all other Ser. 3.
 nations receiv'd their theology, as they did ~~~~~
 most of their other sciences, from the *Phe-*
nicians and *Egyptians*; and consequently,
 whatever evidences we find of a belief of
 future punishments among other nations,
 as we do a great many, we ought in all
 reason to refer to the *Phenicians* and *E-*
gyptians, as originally deriv'd from them.
 Especially considering, that *Diodorus Si-* Diodor.
culus expressly tells us of the *Egyptians*,^{Sicul. Bib.}
 that *the Greeks imitated their funeral*^{l. 1.}
rites, in relation to the punishments of the
wicked in hell, and the pleasant meadows
provided for the good.

And the *Greeks*, that ingenious and po-
 lite people, were indeed so fully persuad-
 ed of the certainty of *future punishments*,
 that many of their learned men are said Windet.
 to have written books professedly concern-^{p. 5.}
 ing them. And their wisest and gravest
 philosophers, as well as their poets (who
 yet are by no means to be slighted in
 this case, as having been, as *Origen* calls L. 1. contra
 them, *the first divines amongst the Greeks*,^{Celf. p. 19.}
and the fathers of their opinions: and, as
Plato, the fathers and guides of wis- Plato in
dom) have given us the very particular^{Lyfide.}
 descrip-

Ser. 2. descriptions of the *torments of the wicked in hell*. And therefore *Justin Martyr* tells them that, *in what we christians say, as to the punishments of wicked men after death, and the rewards of good men, we say the very same things with their poets and philosophers*. And much to the same purpose, *Eusebius* and *Theodor.*

Euseb.
præpar.
l. 2. c. 20.
l. 13. c. 7.
Theodor.
de fine &
judicio,
fol. 154.

Nor do the *Latins*, 'the next famous people of the world for learning and sagacity, fall a whit short of the *Greeks* in their opinions as to this point; but rather seem exactly to have copy'd after them in this, as well as most other matters: observing the same *rites* as to their *dead*, significant of this their belief of *future punishments*; and making much the same declarations concerning them, and giving much the same descriptions of them that they had done. And accordingly

Tertull. *Tertullian*, and the other apologists of the christian faith to the *Latins*, frequently tell them, that their *learned men* agree so exactly with the christians, in what they hold as to future punishments, that it is hardly to be doubted, but that they first receiv'd their knowledge of these things, from

Ap. c. 47.
Minut.
Fel. Octav.
Lactant.
de vita be-
ata l. 7.
sect. 7.
Arnob.
adv. Gen-
tes, l. 2.

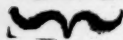
from the christians ancestors, or their books. Ser. 2.

To the Greeks and Romans we may add several other nations, which were con- temporary with them, as the ancient Indians, the Gauls, the Britons, the Getae, the Hyperborei, &c. who are all upon record in history, for agreeing, either directly or by natural consequence, in the belief of future punishments for the wicked.

And then, if from these we pass on to the following ages of the world, we shall find abundantly more ample testimony of the universality of this belief. We shall find it an article both of the Christian and Mahometan creeds: and so readily consented to by all who embrac'd either of those religions; that there can be no manner of room to doubt, but that it had been, as some of the heathens express it, a most ancient and standing opinion in the world, and such as they had ever look'd upon to be a settled law amongst their Gods. We shall find it amongst our new discoveries of the West, and the remotest parts of the East-Indies. And, the more carefully and narrowly we search into

Porphyr.
de Abst. l.
4. c.
Strabo l.
15.
Idem, l. 4.
Edda My-
thol. c. 3.
Plato, Ax-
iochus.

Alcoran. c.
20. c. 72.
Plutarch.
de occulte
vivendo.
& Consol.
ad Uxor.
Plato,
Gorg.
Bp. Stil-
lingfleet's
App. Orig.
Sac. l. 1. c.
Lerius,
Xaverius.

 Ser. 2. into this matter, the more certain ground shall we find for the belief of it.

At present then the account of this matter plainly stands thus. Above half, perhaps near two thirds of the world, I mean *Christians* and *Mahometans*, do explicitly profess their belief of this article of *future punishments*. And if out of the remaining part we take all the *Jews*, who are of the same belief as to this point; and likewise those of the pagans themselves, who are no small number, that agree in it directly; and many others of them, who hold the immortality of the soul, and the future rewards of good men, which are implicit arguments of this belief, and naturally lead to it. And then, if we set aside the *very Barbarous* of all, who differ from the rest of mankind almost in every thing else, as well as this, who seem to live without *thinking*, without *order*, and indeed without so much as any *one* settled principle, but what mere necessity makes for them; we shall find but very few, in the whole world, that are worthy the name of men, who do not, directly or by natural consequences

sequence, acknowledge their belief of fu- Ser. 2.
ture punishments for the wicked. ~~~~~

So that, upon the whole, this acknowledgment seems to have been as ancient as mankind themselves, and as wide spread as the several quarters of the world. There seems to have been, as *Seneca* expresseth Senec. Ep. it, *a general consent among men, either* ^{117.} *in fearing or worshipping the infernal powers.* And therefore, to use *Tully's* ar- Tull. Tusculan. Qu. l. I. gument, *If the consent of all men be the voice of nature, and all, wheresoever dispers'd, do agree that there is something that belongs to those, who are departed out of this life; and if, as he farther urgeth it, all men express a concern, and that too of the highest nature, about those things which are to come upon them after death; what reason can we possibly give, why we should not consent to this voice of nature, why we should not believe, as the rest of mankind have ever done, in this matter?*

But I must not quit this point thus. I am well aware that our age abounds with persons that will pretend, that they have a great deal to object against the proof, which I have here offer'd. And there

Ser. 2. therefore, yet farther to make good what I have advanc'd, and to leave it as little liable to doubts and uncertainty as is possible; I shall most readily give these persons a full and fair hearing, and I hope, by God's assistance, as full and fair an answering too.

First, say they, It cannot be deny'd but that there have been, in all ages of the world, many persons, and some too even of the first rank for learning and knowledge, such as *Lucretius*, *Tully*, *Seneca*, &c. nay, even whole sects of learned men, as the *Sadducees* among the *Jews*, and the *Epicureans* among the heathens, who have not only publickly declar'd, that they had no apprehensions and fears of *future punishments* themselves, but have likewise scoff'd at and ridicul'd them in others; an indecency, which it is highly improbable they would have been guilty of, had these been the receiv'd and popular sentiments of the times they liv'd in.

Now, in answer to this, a great many things may be said: As,

First, That many, if not most, of those who have professedly deny'd that they had any fears or apprehensions of *future punishments*, were prejudic'd and incompetent

tent judges of their own natural senti- Ser. I.
 ments in this case; men who have liv'd
 so as to have made it their interest that
 there should be no such punishments, and
 who consequently gave not due heed to
 what nature and reason were ready to
 dictate to them upon this head, but
 spake the language of their particular
 wishes and affections, rather than their
 sincere understanding, about it; or at least
 men, who liv'd in very wicked times,
 when the fashion ran high against such no-
 tions as these, and were violently carry'd
 away with it. And, for these reasons, the
 judgments of these men, as to this point,
 are not so much to be regarded. And Joseph. de
Bell. Jud.
l. 2. c. 12.
 this, it is well known, was very much
 the case of the *Sadducees*, the *Epicureans*,
 nay indeed of all the heathens in general,
 who, according to St. Paul's black and Rom. I.
dismal description of them, must have
 been prejudic'd to the utmost, by their
 abominably wicked and flagitious lives, a-
 gainst the belief of *future punishments*.
 This *Xaverius* tells us, was the case of
 a sect among the *Japanese*, who deny'd
 the immortality of the soul. And I dare
 appeal to any unprejudic'd person, whe-
 ther

Ser. 2. ther this be not generally the case of those
 ~~~~~ amongst us, who pretend to call in ques-  
 tion the belief of *future punishments*.

*Secondly*, That the professions of many men in this case have been plainly insincere; their fears having often broken out, even in spite of them, and given their tongues the lie (as has been often seen, when these men have been brought into great straits and afflictions, and more especially within danger of death) and their actions (like those of the emperor *Caligula*, whose real fears the thunder discovered, how atheistical soever he ventur'd to be in fair and calm weather) betray'd that inward sense of their minds, which they in vain endeavour'd to suppress and smother.

Sueton. in  
 vit. Calig.  
 c. 52.

*Thirdly*, That, as to what concerns learned men in particular; besides, that some of them were proud and self-conceited, men that affected to appear wiser and braver than the rest of the world, and delighted in contradicting and opposing its most common notions and maxims, especially if they seem'd to have any thing of cowardise or pusillanimity in them, as they fancied those of *future punishments*  
 to

to have; and this was the case of the *Stoicks* in general; that others have been misrepresented, and fallly suppos'd to have declar'd against *future punishments*, whilst they only declar'd against the poets fanciful representations of them: that several, who in one part of their works have seem'd to speak against, and scoff at, *future punishments*; yet in other parts, and those perhaps the most serious and best deserving our regard, have as plainly declar'd for them: and lastly, that others, who are pretended to have given their private sentiments against us, in this cause, yet have freely acknowledg'd us to have the ancients on our side, in it. Besides all this, I say, it is plain that they all write against these notions, as vulgar and common errors at least, and by so doing own that we have the people with us, who generally speak the language of nature more sincerely and unprejudicedly, than learned men themselves; and moreover, that many of them maintain such principles (such for instance as the immortality of the soul, and the certainty of future rewards for the virtuous, &c.) as do strongly, whether they saw or would grant it

Ser. 2. or no, infer the certainty of *future punishments* for the *wicked*.

*Lastly*, That the numbers of these men have been always very small, and even nothing, if compar'd with those, who have made a contrary profession. The *Sadducees*, a small and upstart sect, against the whole body of the *Jews*; an handful of learned men among the heathen, against a far greater number as learned, and the whole populace into the bargain. And consequently the authority of these few can signify very little, against the general verdict of mankind.

*Secondly*, It is farther objected: That there is all the reason in the world to believe that the greatest part, by much, of those who do outwardly acknowledge and profess their belief of *future punishments* for the wicked, yet dissemble their real sentiments, and make this profession only for fashion's sake; because it is undeniably plain that their whole course of life is such, as if they really believ'd nothing less.

Now, tho' I cannot but take notice that those of us, who profess that we believe *future punishments*, will have a  
great

great deal to answer for, if we shall be Ser. 2.  
any ways accessary towards the giving  
such an handle, or bare pretence, as this,  
for the rejecting the belief of them; and  
must therefore most earnestly exhort all  
christians, at their utmost peril, to beware  
of this; yet, I think, it will be very easy  
to shew, that this objection is of no man-  
ner of force to prove what it here aims  
at. For,

*First,* It is evident from reason that  
the lives of men can never pass for cer-  
tain proofs and indications of the inward  
and real sentiments of their minds, any  
where but there, where we have good  
ground to suppose that men do design and  
endeavour to conduct and govern their  
lives, by the real and natural sentiments  
of their minds. But this we are so far  
from having any ground to suppose of  
wicked men, that we are sure of the quite  
contrary. We know very well that their  
lives are not govern'd by the natural sen-  
timents of their minds, which they scarce  
ever consult, much less ever obey, but by  
the unnatural heat and fury of their lusts  
and passions; and therefore their lives may  
indeed very well pass for a true and live-  
ly



Ser. 2. ly copy and representation of *these*; but by no means of *those*. And we can no more argue that men do not believe *future punishments*, because they do not live agreeably to such a belief; than that they do not believe good husbandry better than extravagance, health than sickness, fame than infamy, because they do not act as if they did. Alas! we see nothing of the man in this case, but his lusts and passions, which quite obscure and hide his reason, and not only hurry him away from under the conduct of it, but even frequently carry him directly against it.

*Secondly*, We do almost continually find in fact, that there is no manner of correspondence between mens lives and their real sentiments, in this case; there being nothing more common than for men who have led very wicked lives, to give us all the assurance, that men are capable of giving one to another, by words and all other outward signs, of their having been fully perswaded all along of the *certainty of future punishments*; and this too at such times, when we can have no manner of reason to doubt, but that these outward signs and the faithful expressions

pressions of the inward sense of their Ser. 2.  
minds; in times of greatest seriousness, when they have been under heavy afflictions, nay even, as they thought, drawing near to death it self. And God knows it is but too too common with these very men, after all these serious and solemn declarations of their stedfast belief of a state of *future punishment* for the wicked, quite to forget themselves, to return again to their vomit, and live as carelessly and wickedly, as if they really had no notion of a *future* state at all.

From all which it is plain that we are never more mistaken, than when we argue from the lives of wicked men, to the real sentiments of their minds, in the case before us. They may, and doubtless do most of them, as plainly appears whenever they are heartily frighten'd and brought to be themselves, sincerely believe a state of *future punishments*; but they live without thinking and attending to this belief, as they ought to do; and then it is no wonder that it has so very little influence upon them.

*Thirdly*, We hear it often objected that the evidences which we produce, both

Ser. 2. from *Jews* and *Heathens*, for their belief of *future punishments*, are very dark, imperfect and uncertain; that they say and unsay destroy in one place what they advanc'd in another, seem to speak rather by chance and fancy, than by reason, and deliberate judgment, and consequently are not much to be heeded in this matter.

But to this I answer,

*First.* That this objection, however it may be granted to be true in part, yet is far from being universally so; there being a great many both of the *Jews* and *Heathens*, who have deliver'd their belief of *future punishments*, in such full and express terms, that they seem to come very near the expressions of the gospel revelation it self about them. And, for this reason, several of the ancients, as I hinted before, argu'd that the heathens must have had their notions and belief of them, some way or other, from divine revelation.

*Secondly,* That, so far as this is true, it is not much to be wonder'd at, nor does much affect the force of those evidences, which we have been arguing from.

For,

For, considering that the belief of *future* Ser. 2.  
*punishments* is a belief against the grain of mankind, against their most belov'd lusts and passions, and consequently a belief which they are to the utmost prejudic'd against, and most unwilling to admit; it cannot be expected that they should all have spoken very fully and without wavering about it, unless we should suppose them to have had the most glaring and irresistible evidence for it, which we do not pretend to. And I look upon it to be a much better argument of their real belief of *future punishments*, that they could not forbear owning them, even in such a manner as they did, than it is of their disbelief of them, that they did not own them in a more clear, full and steady manner. Their affections were against this belief, and that it self is proof enough that their reason was very strongly for it, otherwise they would never have acknowledg'd and profess'd it, as they have done; if at all.

*Thirdly*, That great allowances must be made for the times in which many of these learned men liv'd, and the sects of philosophy which they were of; in which

Ser. 2. it was fashionable to speak doubtfully and uncertainly of every thing, even of the plainest things and most easy to be understood. And can it than be any wonder that those who spoke doubtfully of all things, even of things visible and present, should speak doubtfully of the invisible things of a *future* state?

*Fourthly*, That to those who believe the gospel revelation, made by the Son of God himself to mankind, it cannot seem at all strange that, before his coming into the world, the notices of a future state should not have all that clearness and certainty, which they were capable of. It being but reasonable to suppose that the glory of *bringing life and immortality perfectly to light*, should be reserv'd for the Son of God at his coming. Especially considering,

*Lastly*, That God did not, in any age, or in any place of the world, leave himself without sufficient witness of his being and providence; and that the consciences of men did always accuse or excuse them according as they liv'd well or ill; and that their notices of a *future* state of retribution, when duly attended to, were full  
and



and clear enough, for the great end for Ser. 2. which they were design'd, which was to make men live truly good and virtuous lives. As is plain from the excellent examples of many, both *Jews* and *Heathens*, with whom these notices of a *future* state, such as they were, were found abundantly sufficient to deter them from all manner of vice, and to encourage them to, and engage them in, a steady course of piety and virtue, notwithstanding the most strong and powerful temptations to the contrary.

*Lastly*, There is one more objection still in reserve, which, if it cannot disprove the general consent of mankind as to *future punishments*, yet hopes to blunt the edge of it; and that is, that some of the learned men, both among the *Jews* and *Heathens*, tho' they do acknowledge *future punishments* for the wicked, yet maintain that their *punishment* shall be only *annihilation*, or an utter extinction of their beings.

But these *some*, as those men are pleas'd to call them, who love all possible ways of flattering themselves in their infidelity, and are for magnifying any thing that may serve for that purpose, are such a *poor* *handful*

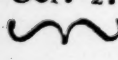
Ser. 2. *handful* of men, even though we should  
put the *Jews* and *Heathens* together, who  
were of this opinion: and the general  
current of those of their own religions,  
is so strong against them in this point, who  
universally mean by a state of *future pu-*  
*nishment*, a state (not of *annihilation*)  
but of *future torments* for the wicked,  
and particularly describe these *torments*,  
and that too in a manner so very like to  
that *wrath*, which has since been *reveal-*  
*ed by the gospel, against all ungodliness*  
*and unrighteousness of men*, that one would  
be almost tempted to think that the Di-  
vine Spirit had, without their knowledge,  
prophecy'd by them of these things: and  
moreover, this opinion has so very little  
ground from reason to support it, as I  
shall have occasion to shew in another  
place, that I cannot think it worth my  
while here to take any farther notice of it.

But, presuming rather that what has  
been already said is sufficient to answer  
that and all other objections which have  
been alledg'd, against our proof of the ge-  
neral consent of mankind as to a *future*  
state of *punishments*, by which I mean  
*torments*, for the wicked: I shall now pro-  
ceed, as I at first propos'd. Se-

Secondly, To shew how this proves the Ser. 2. certainty of these *future punishments*. And, in order to this, I must desire you to consider,

*First*, That this is a very good presumptive argument of the truth of the matter now in debate; it being highly unreasonable to suppose, that much the greater part of mankind, and that too much the wiser and better part, should universally have entertain'd the belief of any thing without sufficient ground and reason for it. And this *Tully* himself allows to be a good argument for proving the *immortality* of the *soul*: *We believe*, Tusculan Qu. 1. 1. *faith he, that the souls of men do exist after this life, because of the agreement of all nations as to this matter: For, I know not how, there is fix'd in the minds of men a foreboding expectation of a future life, and this too is most strong, and discovers it self most clearly, in men of the greatest and profoundest sense and ingenuity.*

*Secondly*, That this argument ought to be of more than ordinary weight with us, in the case before us: because it is plain here, not only that men are not bias'd to their

Ser. 2.  their belief, by the *prejudices* of *worldly interests*, *carnal affections*, &c. but farther, that they believe even against all these. And, however over-hasty and eager we may suppose men to believe such things, as are likely to prove of advantage to them, as the *rewards* of another life, or the like: yet we are sure to find them backward enough (I would to God I could say not too backward) in believing those things which may probably become hurtful to them, especially so very hurtful, as the *torments* of hell may. And therefore we have all the reason in the world to believe that, where men *universally* give their assent in such a case as this, so very much against their strongest inclinations and affections, they have very powerful and cogent reasons for so doing.

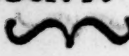
*Lastly*, That this argument, taken from the common fears and apprehensions, the common consent and acknowledgment of mankind, as to *future punishments*, is virtually and implicitly an undeniable proof of the truth and certainty of such *future punishments*. Forasmuch as we are not able to assign any adequate cause of these common fears and acknowledgments  
of

of mankind as to this matter, but what Ser. 2.  
will undeniably prove the truth and cer-  
tainty of the thing itself. ~~~~~

For as for those causes which are assign'd by some men, who had rather believe any thing than *future punishments* I mean *tradition, human policy, education, &c.* Besides that it would puzzle the most sagacious of these men to assign any original of such *tradition, human policy, &c.* much more any sufficient cause of their universal prevalency and success, which will not effectually prove the truth of the matter now in debate. Besides this, I say, I hope I shall be able to make it unexceptionably plain that these cannot be the sole and adequate cause of men's common notions and fears as to this point. The sole and adequate cause, I say, because I fear it cannot be deny'd, but that they are too often, and in too many persons, the cause in part. But that they cannot be totally and universally so, seems to me very evident from these following reasons.

*First,* Because we often find those men possess'd with these notions and fears, who have been so far from having been taught them,



Ser. 2.  them, and train'd up in and accustom'd to them, that, from the very first dawns of their understandings, they have had all such things before them, as should rather have prejudic'd them to, and settled them in, a quite contrary belief; as the examples of most wicked and irreligious parents, the constant mocks and scoffings of prophane companions at these things; and above all, that almost invincible prejudice, in this case, of their own abominably flagitious and ill-spent lives. And what account can we be able to give of this, if there be really no more substantial grounds for these things, than mere human contrivance and institution?

*Secondly,* Because these notions and fears, when once they have taken possession of the mind, can never be utterly extinguished or totally eradicated, as all other mere effects of custom and education may. It is indeed a very difficult thing to get the better of those prejudices which these things bring upon us, but by no means an impossible one, provided men come well inclin'd and resolv'd to the work. But we shall be hard put to it to give one instance, of a man who has been so far able

ble to shake of his notions and fears of Ser. 2.  
hell, that they should never after, when  
he has been in his sober senses in a cool,  
natural thinking condition, haunt and per-  
plex him.

*Thirdly*, Because even those very men,  
who pretend to have found out this nota-  
ble secret, that the notions and fears of  
*hell torments* are vain and groundless, with-  
out any real foundation, and a mere poli-  
tic human fiction; even these very men,  
I say, cannot help being haunted and dis-  
turb'd by them, as if they had something  
solid and real in them. They are, but  
very few of them, able to hold out these  
their pretensions, in times of sharp tryal  
and affliction, and fewer yet to dye hard, as  
they prophanelly call it, that is, without any  
softning and relenting manifestations of their  
apprehensions of *future punishments*. But  
God is often pleas'd even *out of the mouths*  
*of these men*, to establish his truth; and  
to make them at last the better and more  
certain witnesses to it, by how much the  
more they had before try'd all possible  
ways, and us'd all possible endeavours, to  
make themselves doubtful about it, and to  
rid themselves of the fears and apprehen-  
sions

## 64 *The Certainty of Hell-Torments, &c.*

Ser. 2. fions of it. And what is this but a moral demonstration, that there must be something more in this matter, than these men pretend?

What then remains, but that we look out for some more competent and sufficient cause of these general notions and apprehensions of mankind, as to *future punishments*? and what can this be, but either some inward divine impression of these things upon the minds of all men or some outward divine revelation, for them (and, if either, much more both, of these: who shall dare to doubt the truth of what God thus teacheth?) or at least such a suitability and agreeableness in the nature of the things themselves, to the nature and reason of mankind. as has made them universally acknowledg'd and receiv'd by them.

And this brings me to consider the reasonableness of believing that there shall be *future punishments* for the wicked, or the grounds which we have from reason for the belief of them. But this, together with the inferences which might be made from what has been already said, must be the subject of another discourse.

S E R.



## S E R M O N III.

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Preach'd before King *William*  
at *Hampton-Court*, Novemb.  
1699.

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The Certainty of Hell-Torments  
from Principles of Nature and  
Reason.

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MATTHEW XXV. 41.

*Then shall he say unto them on the  
left hand, depart from me, ye curs-  
ed, into everlasting fire, prepared  
for the devil and his angels.*



Now come to consider the ar-  
guments, which we have from  
reason, for the belief of a  
*future state of punishment* for  
the wicked.

VOL. II.

F

And



Ser. 3. And here, allowing that there is a God (and I do not pretend to argue about *future punishments*, with such as will not allow that) I mean a Being of *infinite holiness, justice, wisdom, power*, and, in short, of *all possible perfections*; and the *Creator* of *man*, and of *this world* in which we live; I think it will be no very difficult matter to establish the belief of *future punishments*, from *reason*, upon pretty clear and sure grounds.

That such a God as this can punish sinners, in another life, is evident at first sight, and is deny'd by no body: and therefore the only question is, what he will do: and I hope soon to shew, that we want not store of good arguments, to induce us firmly to shew that he will do this.

All the arguments drawn from reason to prove the *immortality* of the *soul*, are implicitly, and in effect, so many plain proofs of the certainty of *future punishments* for the wicked. For, besides that our reason is not able to conceive any so wise and noble end, for which God should have given men *immortal* souls, as that he might thereby have an opportunity of *rewarding* or *punishing* them in another life,



life, according to their behaviour in this. Ser. 3.  
Besides this, I say, it is evident from the nature of the thing itself, that if the souls of wicked men shall exist at all in another life, their very existence must become a *punishment* to them; they must necessarily exist in *misery* and *torment*. Some torments will naturally arise from that very *frame* and *disposition* of *mind*, full of *malice*, *envy*, *anger*, and perhaps *vain hankerings* after *bodily* and *fleshy* enjoyments, which wicked men shall carry with them into another life. Others, from those stinging reflections, which they shall there make upon their past *folly*, *baseness*, *ingratitude*, *undutifulness* and *unfaithfulness* to God and their own reason; which, however they may here make a shift in great measure to divert, or at least very much to alleviate the smart of, by *carnal* and *sensual* pleasures, they will there find (where there souls shall be no longer imprison'd in such bodies as they now are, which obstruct their natural operations, and help mightily to cloud and obscure their notions of things) cannot possibly be avoided; and that too in their full force with the most penetrating and cutting aggravations imaginable.

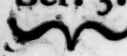
Ser. 3. ginable. And then farther, tho' we should  
suppose, without any reason, that God will  
not immediately inflict positive punishments upon sinners in a future state, yet it is plainly against all reason to suppose, that God will give them any assurance that he will never do this: and if not, they, conscious to themselves of their own demerits, must constantly be under the most dismal fears and apprehensions of being severely punish'd, by the more immediate hand of God, *one time or other*. And all this put together, even though we should suppose nothing more (which yet, before I have done, I hope to prove we have great reason to do) will make up a very substantial stock of *misery and torment*, for wicked men in another life.

All the arguments, that prove the certainty of *future rewards* for good men in another world, do likewise equally prove the certainty of *future punishments* for the wicked; nay, rather more strongly; forasmuch as of the two, *punishments* seem to be more necessary to attend the end which is aim'd at by both, than rewards. And yet mankind have generally been very ready to allow the force of these arguments

ments for the certainty of *future rewards* Ser. 3.  
for good men : and I verily believe that there would hardly be any one man in the world, that would in the least doubt of it, were it not for the sake of the consequence : were it not, that they manifestly see, that a belief of *future rewards* for good men must draw after it the belief of *future punishments* for the wicked. And is not this most unreasonable partiality, to reject that evidence, which we ourselves acknowledge to be good and sufficient, as to things which we do like, only because it is apply'd to things which we do not like ?

Farther I desire it may be consider'd, that the necessity of the belief of *future punishments* for the wicked, even in order to the peace and good government of this world, acknowledg'd by the very *Heathens*, nay allow'd by the *Atheists* themselves (as is plain from their pretence that this belief is a state engine, invented, kept up and manag'd by politicians, to preserve the world in awe and good order) is no mean presumptive argument of the certainty of such *punishments*. For what can be more reasonable to be believ'd,



*Ser. 3.*  than that the wise and good Creator of the world has always given his creatures sufficient ground and reason for the belief of that principle, which is so apparently necessary for their comfort and well-being in this life?

To this we may add: That the very nature of vice it self, as it is wisely contriv'd by the author of nature, seems to be a very plain imitation and indication of *future punishments*. He has thought fit so to order the nature of it, that it shall always be attended with some such evil circumstances, as shall make it in some measure a *punishment* to it self; and is not this a sure ground to believe, that he doth take notice of sin, and judge fit and decree that it shall be punish'd? But then this punishment, which God has interwoven in the nature of sin, is so inadequate to the demerits of sin, that we can only look upon it to be in part of payment; to be a pledge and earnest of a more adequate *punishment* hereafter, a kind of sensible assurance that, since God has only begun this work in this world, he will perfect it in another.

These

These arguments I thought fit to mention, because I really take them to have a great deal in them; enough, if duly attended to, to make full proof of the matter now in debate before us; at least enough to prepare and open the way for any fuller proof that may be offer'd of it. And I have but barely mention'd them, both because I think the force of them lies in a little compass, and is clear and easy to be apprehended; and also because I design to insist more largely upon a more regular argument, drawn up into form, in the following propositions.

*First*, That God will certainly punish all sinners, and that too in proportion to their demerits, either in this life, or the next.

*Secondly*, That God doth not do this, in this present life. And therefore,

*Lastly*, That he will certainly do it, in the next.

The *first* of these propositions, viz. *that God will certainly punish all sinners, and that too in proportion to their demerits, either in this life or the next*, is that which will need most proof; as being that which wicked men are most unwilling



Ser. 3. ling to be convinc'd of, well knowing  
 ~~~~~ that the great stress of their whole cause depends upon it, and that if this be once prov'd, a little proof will serve for the other two. I shall therefore chiefly spend my time, in endeavouring to make out the truth and certainty of this *first* proposition. And, in order to that, must desire you seriously to consider the arguments, which follow.

First, That God has made man a punishable creature, and that this is a strong presumptive argument that he will punish him for his sins.

Secondly, That it is very much for God's honour, and agreeable to our best notions of him and his divine attributes, to believe that he will punish sinners; nay, farther that we know not how to reconcile our notions of him and his divine attributes, to a belief that he will not punish them.

Lastly, That God doth very signally and remarkably punish some sinners; and that from hence it may be reasonably inferr'd, that he designs to punish all.

First, *That God has made man a punishable creature*, &c. He who is his Creator

tor

tor, and therefore sole Lord, has given him Ser. 3.
a law (one law at least, as every body must own, that of reason) to govern himself by; a law which he cannot possibly be ignorant of, because God has *put it in his inward parts, and written it in his very heart*, and which therefore wants not sufficient promulgation; and a law so plain too, and easy to be understood, that, as to the greater and more important duties of it, all mankind have generally been agreed about the sense of it. And God has put man into the counsel of his own hands, left him at perfect liberty to act according to his own will, to choose or refuse, obey or disobey this law, as he shall think fit. He has given him sufficient knowledge and power both to understand and keep this law, if he will use them accordingly; but he has left it to him to choose whether he will do so or no. From all which it is plain that mens sins, or transgressions of this law, must be voluntary, must be their own choice, their own proper acts and deeds, and as such, may fairly be imputed to them as faults, do partake of the nature of guilt, and if so, are justly liable to *punishment*. And how then

Ser. 3. then, I would fain know, could God have declar'd more plainly, by the frame and make of man, that he design'd to punish him for his sins, than he has done; especially considering, as has been before prov'd, that he has implanted in the mind of man, natural presages and expectations of such *punishment*? And have we not all the reason in the world to believe that he will punish sinners, when it is so evident that he has prepar'd and fitted, and as it were mark'd them out, for *punishment*?

[We have no better rule to judge of God's designs and intentions by, than by enquiring into the natures of things, to see what ends and uses he has fitted them for. And, tho' I do not say that God must necessarily make that use of things, which men are pleas'd to suppose, from the consideration of their frame, and seeming tendency of their nature, he design'd them for (for men may easily be mistaken, and are at best but very imperfect judges of God's designs) yet I do say, and in this I have the consent of the wisest men in all ages of the world, that where it is very plain, from the natures of things, that they are
extremely

extremely well fitted to answer this or that end, and where the end it self is worthy of God (as no body can deny that end to be for which we are now arguing from the nature of man) this is a strong presumptive argument, that the divine wisdom design'd them for it. Ser. 2.

Much more, if the end be, not only worthy of God, but greatly for his honour, tending to very noble and illustrious purposes, to display the glories of his attributes to vindicate his authority, to give a sufficient sanction to his laws, and to promote the true good and happiness of his creatures; in such a case it seems to be not only unreasonable, but even a sort of sacrilege, to rob God of the honour of having design'd so great and glorious an end. And that this is the case of that end now before us, for which God, by the frame of man, has evidently fitted him, as it may appear in part, from what has been already said of the usefulness of the belief of future punishments, for preserving the peace and good order of this world; so will it farther appear from considering,

Secondly,

Ser. 3. Secondly, *That it is very much for God's honour, and agreeable to our best notions of him and his divine attributes, to believe that he will punish sinners; nay farther, that we know not how to reconcile our notions of him and his divine attributes, to a belief that he will not punish them.*

That it is an honourable thing, and becoming God, to punish sinners, can be doubted by none, who have any true sense of what sin is, how heinous an affront towards God, how impudent a flying in the face of him? For what less does the sinner in effect say, when he wilfully persists in a constant course of transgressing God's laws, against his most express and often repeated warnings to the contrary, than that he doth not like them; that he thinks he can make better for himself; that he doth not desire to be like God; but rather the contrary, that he doth not fear him, and that he will not have him to reign over him? *And shall not God visit for these things? shall he not avenge himself on such enemies as these? Can we think it consistent with his honour, not to chastise this base ingratitude, this bold rebellion, these insolent*

solent taunts and revilings, these daring Ser. 3.
defiances, of his own creatures? When
doth he appear so truly awful and terrible,
so truly himself, the *Lord of heaven and earth*,
infinite in majesty and power, as when he
scattereth the wicked in the imagination of their hearts, and
makes all that hate him flee before him? And
what reason can we possibly then have to
fancy, that God will not appear like himself,
and that he will not do that, which is so
highly for his honour and glory to be done?

Do not all God's attributes conspire together to prove that he will punish sinners? What more reasonable to conceive, than, that a God of infinite knowledge, power and goodness, should employ these, in *observing and governing the works of his own hands*? than that a God of infinite purity and holiness should, according to the utmost of his power, encourage virtue and discourage vice, in all those his creatures whom he has made capable of them? and that, for this purpose, he should give them a sufficient assurance of *rewards and punishments*, which are motives fit to influence, and yet will not
compel

Ser. 3. compel rational and free agents? than
that a God of infinite wisdom, having
created a race of beings, capable of ministering to his glory and each other's good, in a very high degree, should not suffer these noble ends to be defeated, for want of a discreet sanction of *rewards* and *punishments*, which he could not but foresee would alone be sufficient to engage men to use their powers and capacities aright for the attainment of these ends? Or, *lastly*, than that a God of infinite justice and majesty should not suffer his laws to be trampled under foot, the ends of his creation to be perverted, his authority to be contemn'd, and his honour vilify'd; without vindicating himself, and severely animadverting upon all such as should dare thus to neglect him, much more contemn and rebel against him? All this is easy and natural, and our minds meet with no manner of difficulty, in the conception and belief of it.

But the difficulty lies all on the other side, how to reconcile the contrary of all this to our notions of God and his divine attributes. How to persuade our selves that a God of infinite knowledge, power
and

and goodness, should neither mind nor Ser. 3.
care what becomes of his own creatures. ~~~~~

'That a God of infinite purity and holiness should be indifferent whether vice or virtue thrives and prospers, and do nothing to encourage the one or discourage the other. That a God of infinite wisdom should lay great and noble designs, and yet not make sufficient provision for the bringing them to effect; and, *lastly*, that a God of infinite justice and majesty should not deal to men, *according to their works*, but should let his own laws be broken, the *foundation of the earth be put out of course*, *wickedness and cruelty, rapine and violence, confusion and every evil work go on and prosper*, himself be affronted at any rate, his enemies become triumphant; and yet either not regard, or at least not chastise and regulate these great enormities. These are indeed difficulties, such difficulties as we may safely challenge all the wit of man to get over; such as we must ever despair of reconciling to our notions of God and his attributes. But, blessed be God, there is no need of attempting this; since, as I hope to prove effectually.

Lastly,

Ser. 2. *Lastly, God doth very signally and remarkably punish some sinners: and hence it may be reasonably inferr'd that he designs to punish all.*

How little soever men may be apt to take notice of God's ordinary punishments of sinners, such as those before mention'd, which he has interwoven in the very nature of sin, and which, if duly consider'd, would appear to be as surely his, as any others; yet he is pleas'd sometimes to *make bare his arm*, in so visible a manner, and so immediately and conspicuously to chastise sinners himself; that one would think it impossible, for the most wilful and obstinate unbeliever to forbear making the *Psalmist's* inference, on behalf of the wicked, which he makes on behalf of the righteous, *Verily, there is a reward for the wicked, doubtless there is a God that judgeth in the earth.*

Thus for instance; sometimes God has been pleas'd to send his angels, visibly to smite sinners; several examples of which we have in sacred history, as in the case of *Balam*, *Numb. xxii. 31.* of *David* and his people, *2 Sam. xxiv. 17.* and particularly

particularly of *Herod*, at the time of his Ser. 3.
receiving his divine honour from his flat-
terers, *Acts* xii. 2. At other times,
God has thought fit, by dreams, and vi-
sions, and apparitions, to discover several
crimes, which had perhaps for many years
lain hid, more especially murders, and
to bring to light the authors of them,
and set them before human tribunals, and
there make the *punishments*, which they
thought themselves securely screen'd from,
overtake them (and of this we have so
many well attested and unexceptionable
instances in this nation, that it is impos-
sible for men to doubt of them, unless
they are resolv'd to doubt of every thing,
that depends upon human testimony. And
it is but a very poor excuse to say, that
so many relations of this kind are false,
that we know not what to believe: for
we know very well, and act accordingly
in all other cases, that we are always to
believe in proportion to our evidence;
and that the want of evidence in one in-
stance doth not necessarily prove the want
of it in another.) And *lastly*, when God
doth not thus supernaturally shew himself;
yet there is often so much exquisite wisdom

Ser. 3. and justice to be seen, in the *punishments* of Sinners, either as to the manner, or the timing of them (paying and requiting them, in their own kind, nay, those very things which they have done to others: pulling down upon their own heads that very mischief which they had design'd for others: balking their plots and contrivances, in the very critical moment, and nicking them, if we may so speak, in the very top and glory of their wickedness: as in the case of *Herod* before-mention'd, who, at the very moment of his being honour'd as *God*, was, by the immediate infliction of a most noisom and foul disease, effectually shewn to be but a man, &c.) that we cannot with the least colour of reason, ascribe these to chance, which is incapable of acting either *wisely* or *justly*, but must in all reason ascribe them to a *just* and *wise* providence, which ordereth all things with infinite *wisdom* and *justice*, and say with the Psalmist: *Hereby shall men know that this is thy hand, and that thou, Lord, hast done it.*

This I think abundantly enough to make good the first part of my present argument, *viz.* that God doth very signally and remarkably

markably punish some sinners. As to the Ser. 3. latter part, the inference from hence, that God doth design to punish all, sure nothing can be more reasonable than this is. The great difficulty lies in proving that God does observe and design to punish, or does actually punish, sinners *at all*. This being once granted, there can be no reason given why God, if he punish some, should not punish all. Are they not all alike punishable creatures? Doth not God abhor and detest sin alike in all persons? Do not all sinners break his laws, defy his authority, affront his sovereignty, disparage his wisdom, provoke his vengeance? And what shadow of reason then can we possibly have to conceit, that God will punish some sinners, and not all?

I know but one thing that can be said, with the least appearance of reason, in this case; and that is, that it is sufficient, in order to the good government of the world, and to keep mankind generally in awe, that some few examples should be now and then made; but this certainly is not true. It is the belief that all sinners shall be punish'd either here or hereafter, that chiefly keeps men in tolerable order and subjection: take

Ser. 3. but this away, and men will soon run the
 ~~~~~  
 risque of their being of the number of those few, that God usually lays his hand upon in this world. Join'd with this belief indeed it may be sufficient, for the government of the world, that God should punish but some sinners in this world, and may be a very good reason why he doth not punish more than he doth in it; but without it, it cannot. Besides this reason, so far as it is good, holds only as to this world; but can be no reason why God should not punish all sinners in the next.

This then I take for granted, that all sinners will certainly be punish'd, at one time or other, either here or hereafter; and, if punish'd at all, there can be no doubt but they will be punish'd, *in proportion to their demerits*: this being no more, than is agreeable to the laws of *justice and equity*. And shall not the judge of all the earth do right? Or can we think that he, who doth every thing else in *weight and measure*, will not do this so too, in which his own honour, and the *interests of piety and virtue*, are so deeply concern'd?

I do

I do not say that God must punish sinners, *in full proportion to their demerits*: Ser. 3. it seems to be too much presumption in us, especially in such a case as this, which must be allow'd to depend very much upon God's arbitrary will and pleasure, to say what God must do. But, since it is undeniably plain that God may justly thus punish sinners, if he so pleases: I think it very great presumption, on the other hand, to suppose that he will not, without some good and substantial ground for such a supposition. I know men will be very apt to plead God's mercy, as a ground for this supposition: but alas! if we consider God's justice as well as his mercy; and withal, that this world is the proper scene of God's mercy, as the other is of his justice: and moreover add to this, that every sinner will have had an abundant measure of mercy from God in this life, and that the abuse of this mercy is itself one very good reason for God's punishing sinners with rigorous justice: I fear sinners will find but little comfort in this plea. Neither will I take upon me exactly to determine, how great the *demerits* of sinners are, and consequently how great their *punishments* will be. I



86      *The Certainty of Hell-Torments,*

Ser. 3. shall only say that they are undoubtedly *very great*, as every man must needs be sensible, who considers of how *heinous*, and *offensive*, and *provoking* a nature to God sin is; and that the greatest punishments, that have ever been inflicted upon sinners in this world, cannot reasonably be suppos'd to have been adequate to the guilt and merit of their sins. And this brings me to shew,

Secondly, *That God does not punish all sinners, and that too in proportion to their demerits, in this life.* It has been an ancient complaint, both of *Jews* and *Heathens*, that many sinners hardly meet with any punishment at all in this world: nay, on the contrary, that their outward condition here is often so thriving and prosperous, that they may seem rather to be *rewarded* than *punish'd*. They are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagu'd like other men. Their eyes stand out with fatness, they have more than heart could wish. They become old, yea, are mighty in power. Their seed is establish'd in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes. Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God

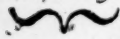
Pf. 73.

Job 21. 8.

2.

God upon them. And our own experience Ser. 3. will easily confirm this to us, by plenty of instances.

And for those sinners, whom God doth punish here, yet how little proportion do their *punishments* bear to the merits of their sins? Excepting the *inward anguish, fretting, vexation and torment*, that sin is naturally apt to beget in the minds of sinners (and even this they have many ways of *stupifying* and *lulling asleep* in great measure: and besides the very *sting* of this is the *apprehension* and *expectation* of *future* punishments) excepting this I say, what affliction is there, that befalls wicked men, by way of *punishment* in this life, that doth not equally befall good men, either in the very same or an equivalent kind, by way of tryal of their dutifulness and obedience. I believe we shall be hard put to't, to match any wicked man with upright *Job*, as to outward calamities. And can we then possibly think those afflictions to be *sufficient* for the *punishment* of *sinners*, which, or greater, they themselves perhaps, had they been good men, must have endur'd, for proving of their virtues. 'Tis true indeed these pu-

Ser. 3.  nishments of wicked men are sufficient for the ends, for which God designs them at present, to awaken, and frighten, and warn sinners to forsake their sins, and to return to him : but they are by no means sufficient, for a total and adequate punishment of sin.

Nay, though we should take the *greatest* and *most severe* punishments, that God has ever inflicted upon sinners in this world, as for instance, the *burning of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire and brimstone* ; yet what is there in all this, that can be thought to come up to the demerits of a sinful course of life ; or which has not happen'd, in as full measure, to good men, in the very same or like instances ? What manner of proportion is there between a few hours *torment*, though never so exquisite, and a continu'd course of rebellion against God, for many years : and that too attended with the most *heinous* and *aggravating* circumstances, that can possibly be conceiv'd ? What more is there in this, if so much, than has been in the sufferings of many *martyrs* for religion, who have endur'd *fiery tryals*, made full as sharp, and probably much longer, than this was ?

It

It is plain then that it is so far from being true, that God doth punish all sinners, and that too *in proportion to their demerits* in this life: that the contrary is most evident, that some sinners are hardly punish'd at all, the greatest part but slightly, and none near so much as their sins deserve. And this makes the way clear for my inference, in the

*Third and last place: viz.* That therefore God will certainly thus punish sinners in the next life.

This, being a just and regular conclusion, drawn from my two foregoing propositions, cannot possibly be false, if they are true, as I hope I have sufficiently prov'd them to be. And therefore, I think, there is nothing left for me more to do; unless it be to represent to you, in few words, the full force of this whole argument, and so leave it to your serious consideration.

I have endeavour'd to shew, from the nature of man, whom God has made a *punishable* creature: from the *nature* of God, whose divine attributes do mightily countenance and encourage a belief that he will punish sinners, and seem to be utterly irreconcilable

Ser. 2.



**Ser. 3.** concileable to a contrary persuasion: and, *lastly*, From those actual punishments, which God doth remarkably inflict upon some sinners in this life, that God will certainly punish all sinners, and that too in proportion to their demerits, either in this life or the next.

And yet, That God doth not *thus* punish *all* sinners in *this* life, I have made plain both from our *own*, and our fore-fathers experience, which jointly bear testimony that many sinners are hardly punished here at all: and that of those, who are acknowledged to be punished, most are punish'd vastly beneath the demerits of their sins, and none in any near proportion to them.

And what now is the true inference from all this: but that God has reserved some other time, some other place, that is the next life, in which these things shall be more equally adjusted, God's honour be fully vindicated, and the measure of his enemies punishments fill'd up?

Give me leave only to apply what has been said in this, and my foregoing discourse, and I have done. And,

*First,*

*First*, Since there is so very much to be Ser. 3.  
said, from nature and reason, for the cer-  
tainty of *hell-torments*; it cannot possibly  
be any objection against the christian reli-  
gion, that it requires the belief of them.  
On the contrary, this is a very good argu-  
ment on the side of christianity; and thus  
far all men are prepared, by their own na-  
ture and reason, to become christians. And  
this is what the christian apologists often  
tell the heathens, that, as to the belief of a  
*future state of rewards and punishments*,  
their faith was before-hand with us in this  
point, and that the books of their learned  
men were full of it.

For shame then, let not us christians shew  
any unwillingness to believe that, which,  
even tho' we never had heard of christiani-  
ty, we should have had good ground and  
reason to have believ'd. Let us not, now  
that we have much clearer evidence than  
the heathens had, be more hard to believe,  
or believe more faintly, even than they did.  
But, on the contrary, let us believe most  
firmly and unfeignedly, what our nature,  
reason and divine revelation, so clearly and  
harmoniously teach us, and heartily bless  
God, that the main things which he has  
call'd

Ser. 3. call'd us, by divine Revelation, to the belief of, are so agreeable to our natures, so easy to our understandings, so unanimously recommended to us by the general tradition and consent of the wisest and best men of all ages and nations, and attended with such ample credentials from our own consciences.

*Secondly*, If there be really such good ground from nature and reason, for the belief of *hell-Torments*, as I have prov'd there is; then it is undeniably plain, that our great Pretenders to nature and reason are nothing less than what they pretend to be. Nothing, you see, can have a clearer foundation, both in nature and reason, than this; and yet nothing is so little believ'd among these men as this. Where then is their respect to nature and reason? Even just there where it always useth to be, in their pretences and vain boastings, but no where else.

The truth on't is, these men are ashamed to renounce christianity barefacedly, which is the religion in fashion, and which I can easily believe to be not very agreeable to them, without offering some sort of an excuse for so doing; and therefore they make

a loud out-cry of nature and reason, and Ser. 3. endeavour to misrepresent them and christianity, as at variance with each other; whereas they are indeed, as appears from the instance which we have been treating of, the most friendly things in the world, and in every thing help to countenance and confirm each other.

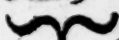
Let us then as men, much more as christians, beware of being deceiv'd and led aside by these mens pretensions, and of thinking the worse of christianity, for what they have the impudence to say of it. And not only so, but let us all in our several stations, use our utmost Endeavours to expose the baseness and dishonesty of these mens designs, and to hinder the propagation of their pernicious and hypocritical principles, which under a false guise and shew of reason, aim at the utter extirpation and destruction of it.

*Thirdly*, Supposing that from what has been said to prove the certainty of *hell-torments*, we have prov'd only the *probability* of them, nay, or even shewn that there can be no *certainty* that they will not be; yet even hence it will evidently appear, what prodigious folly, what unaccount-



Ser. 3. accountable madness those men are guilty of, who venture to scoff at and ridicule the belief of them. Nothing less than an absolute and infallible demonstration, that there will be no such thing, can possibly warrant this practice ; and it is against all rules of prudence, to run any, the least, hazard in such a case as this, where, if there be any hazard at all, it must needs be very considerable and important.

For certainly, if there be such a place as *hell*, in another world (and we are strangely constituted creatures if there be not) the very hottest part of it will be the portion of those men, who endeavour by all imaginable tricks and artifices, to draw men off from the belief of it ; and, by so doing, defeat God's wise and gracious ends in his threatnings of it, the security of his own honour, and of his creatures happiness, pull down the strong holds of religion, for such above all are the fears and belief of *hell-torments*, and betray their brethren, body and soul, into everlasting ruin and perdition. Certainly a man had need be very wary, and tread very surely, when the consequence of his mistaking, or treading  
awry,

awry, will be no less than the hottest place Ser. 3.  
in *hell* it self. 

*Fourthly*, If there be an *hell* for the ungodly in another life, then we can have little reason to envy or repine at their prosperity in this, or to murmur against and accuse God upon account of it. But of this more in my following discourse.

*Lastly*, From all that has been said, we cannot but plainly see the great folly and danger of leading a wicked life, which is sure to end in inexpressible *woe* and *bitterness*. It is great wisdom in all cases, to keep our eyes fixed upon the final upshot and event of things, and to consider what will become of us in the end thereof; but in no case can this possibly be more reasonable, than in the case before us, where our all is at stake, and the issue must be nothing less than the extreme happiness or misery of our whole beings, souls and bodies, for ever and ever. Can we be too careful, can we possibly act too securely in such a case?

It will be no small comfort to us to live free from the anxious and tormenting fears and apprehensions of being to undergo the punishments of our sins, in another life.  
And

Ser. 5. And were there not so much certainty, as there is, of *future punishments*; yet it would be great *wisdom*, and it would make us very easy in this world, to take care to live so, that we shall be in no manner of danger of being hurt by them, if they should be. And, as to another life, if there should be no such thing, yet the very worst that can happen to us, will be no more than what must happen to the wicked too, which is to cease to be for ever; nay, according to the hypothesis of some, who believe future *rewards* for the good, tho' they deny future *punishments* for the wicked, we may be exceeding happy in the next World, when the wicked shall not be at all, and our care to avoid *hell*, tho' there should be no such thing, may be rewarded with *heaven*. So that upon all accounts, it is our manifest interest to live so, as that we may have no reason to be afraid of *hell*: this immediate benefit we shall reap from so doing, that, while, even in this world, *there is no peace to the wicked, but they are like the troubled sea, which cannot rest, whose waters are continually casting up mire and filth*: we shall be all calm within, void of any the least

least fear, and *full of quietness and assurance for ever* ; and, if our own natures and reason are not made to deceive us, we shall hereafter find, to our unspeakable comfort, all our pains to avoid hell turn to rich account, and become an occasion of everlasting joy, comfort, satisfaction, exultation and triumph to us. Ser. 3.

Wherefore, to conclude all in the words of honest *Socrates*, *Let us, knowing these things to be so, use our utmost endeavours to present our selves pure and spotless before our Judge* ; words, tho' proceeding from an *heathen*, not much unlike those of an inspir'd writer, 2 *Pet.* 13. 14, 17. *Seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of your judge in peace, without spot and blameless : and beware lest ye being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.*





## S E R M O N IV.

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Preach'd before King *William*  
at *Hampton-Court*, *Novemb.*  
*1700.*

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The Greatness of Hell-Torments.

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MATTHEW XXV. 41.

*Then shall he say unto them on the  
left hand, depart from me, ye curs-  
ed, into everlasting fire, prepared  
for the devil and his angels.*



HAVING, in my former dis-  
courses upon these words,  
finish'd what I propounded  
first to treat of from them,  
*viz. the certainty of hell-  
torments, from principles of nature and  
reason ;*

*reason* ; I shall now proceed, according to Ser. 4. the method which I set my self, to consider the *greatness* of them, and, in so doing,

*First*, To shew that they will certainly be *inconceivably great* ; and,

*Secondly*, To enquire, as far as we are able, wherein the *greatness* of them will consist.

And, forasmuch as, in my former discourses, I have so far gratify'd some men, as, chiefly for their sakes, to argue only from principles of *nature* and *reason*, for the proof of that, which is the main point in dispute between us, *viz.* the *certainty* of *hell-torments* (though still with this caution, that the fullest and clearest proof of this matter must be had from the *Holy scriptures*) I shall now be less solicitous about gratifying them as to what follows, and shall freely argue from *revelation*, as well as *nature* and *reason* ; and, though I shall not neglect or pass over proofs from these, yet I shall no longer confine my self wholly to them.

*First* then, I am to shew that the *torments* of *hell* will certainly be *inconceivably great*. And this is so plain a truth, that

Ser. 4. the very *heathens* themselves, by the mere  
 ~~~~~ light of *nature*, seem to have been perfectly well assur'd of it. For not only their *poets* (whose heated fancies and imaginations may perhaps be suppos'd to have carry'd them a great deal too far, upon this subject (though even these, in my opinion, are not wholly to be slighted in this case, because *poets*, especially good ones, always write with some regard to the sentiments of the *age*, in which they live) but also their best and gravest philosophers, do both expressly assert the extremity and intolerableness of *hell-torments*, and likewise give us such terrifying and amazing descriptions of them, as may abundantly convince us, that they did really believe them to be infinitely *great*, infinitely beyond all that they were able to express. A small taste of which you may be pleas'd to take in *Plato* only, who, under the person of one who is suppos'd to have seen *hell*, and afterwards to have return'd to this world again, tells us what dreadful spectacles he there saw: how he beheld men tortur'd, with numberless tortures of all sorts; some burning in rivers of fire, others shivering and freezing in streams of  
 excessive

Platon.
 Phædo,
 Gorgias
 Axiochus,
 Leg. l. 10.

excessive coldness, some toss'd about and Ser. 4.
 torn by wild beasts, others incessantly
 burnt with the lamps of the furies, and
 more particularly some (and certainly we
 can hardly think of any thing more terri-
 ble to sense) bound hand and foot, then
 flea'd, and thrown upon thorns and pric-
 kles, to be tortur'd.

And indeed it is no great wonder that
 they should judge so right in this matter:
 because the reason of the thing it self must
 needs make it very evident, to every one
 that impartially considers it. For, whe-
 ther we reflect upon the heinous and odi-
 ous nature of sin, and its direct opposition
 to our own reason and the *divine nature*
 and *will*: or upon the infinite *majesty* of
 that *God*, who is affronted by our sins: or
 lastly, upon those infinite obligations to
 God, which men break through to their
 sins; we must necessarily acknowledge the
 circumstances on all hands to be so very
inexcusable, aggravating and provoking,
 that the divine vengeance has all the rea-
 son, that can possibly be imagin'd, to in-
 flict the most severe and dreadful punish-
 ments upon sinners.

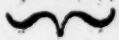
Ser. 4.

And accordingly we find by experience it has always done. The *rebellious angels* immediately felt God's vengeful arm, upon their *rebellio*, and were soon tumbled down headlong, from their bright seats of *everlasting bliss* and *glory*, into the dark regions of *eternal horror*, woe and misery; and the very first sin of man was punish'd, with the loss of *immortality*, the *divine presence*, and all the conveniencies and delights of *Paradise*: and not only so, but with the curse of continual *labour*, *pain*, and *sorrow* all the while that he should live, and in the end, with death it self. Afterwards, an *universal deluge* swept away the whole world, excepting only eight persons, for their sins; and, for the same cause, the Lord rain'd down fire and brimstone upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrab*, and destroy'd them. And, to name but one more instance, the very beloved people of God the *Jews*, for their sin in *rejecting* and *crucifying the Lord of life*, were prosecuted with such a long and dreadful train of woes and miseries, at the destruction of *Jerusalem*, as it would make your very hearts bleed only to hear repeated, So careful has God been in all ages,
to

to manifest his high dislike of, and indignation against sin, and the severity of those judgments, with which it shall be punish'd. Ser. 4. And then, as St. Peter argues, *if God spared not the angels that sinn'd* (a race of much higher and nobler beings than we are) *but cast them down to hell, and deliver'd them into chains of darkness, to be reserv'd unto judgment*; and brought a sentence of misery and death upon all mankind, for the sins of their first parents; *and spar'd not the old world, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly*; ^{2 Pet. 2. 4, 5, 6, 9.} *and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemn'd them with an overthrow*; and pour'd out the vials of his wrath upon his own people the Jews, in the most terrible and astonishing manner imaginable; then let us be assur'd, that he knoweth how *to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punish'd.*

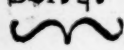
Farther, We have most of us seen or heard of in others, and I fear many of us felt within our selves, some specimens, as it were, of *hell-torments*, even in this world: when God has been pleas'd to let loose the consciences of sinners upon them,

Ser. 4. and to *lay open* the *prospect* of their *future* state *before* their eyes. But, Lord! who can be able to express the terrors, that such men are then in? Who, that has seen them, can reflect upon them, without the *utmost horror*? Who, that has felt them, can think any thing worthy the name of *pain* after them? Oh the *uneasiness*, the *restlessness*, the *agonies*, the *racks*, the *tortures* of a *wounded spirit*! Oh the *doleful symptoms*, the *dire effects*, the *sulbreness*, the *tremblings*, the *blood-sweats* of *despair*. Blessed God! who can conceive the *greatness* of those torments, which have such *terrible effects*? Who shall be able to endure those torments, which few, very few, have courage enough so much as to think on? Oh! how would it have affected the most obstinate and obdurate heart among us, to have seen the unhappy *Spira*, *weltring* upon his bed, as if it had been upon a bed of flames: seeking rest, but finding none: nay, not so much as hoping for it, while he sought it; and to have beheld the fierceness of those torments, which in spite of all attempts to comfort and relieve him, merely his own guilty mind, and the fears
of

of hell only, continually lash'd and scourg'd Ser. 4.
him with. 

And yet alas ! these foretastes of hell, and all other even the severest judgments of God against sinners in this world, are but very faint and feeble representations, but mere dawnings and glimpses, of that wrath which shall be reveal'd in the next.

That, that is the place which God has reserv'd for the more *signal* and *consummate* punishment of sinners ; there all circumstances shall combine together, for the aggravation of their miseries : and all those reasons shall there cease, which have, in great measure, ty'd up the hands of divine vengeance in this world. There all the doubts of the wicked will be too plainly resolv'd : their infidelity turn'd into a faith, which will make them tremble : and those small hopes, which they once had, into pure and unmix'd despair. There will be no sleep, no friends, no diversion, to gain them now and then a short respite from their miseries, as in this life. *Lastly*, There the righteous and the unrighteous shall be perfectly separated, and there shall no longer be any danger of destroying the innocent with the wicked : there the season for
finners

Ser. 4.  sinners repentance will be at an end, and consequently all long-suffering and patience, upon that account, at an end too: and, for the same reason, there the prayers of good men, on behalf of the wicked, shall cease, and God shall be no longer importun'd and with-held by them, from giving his avenging arm its full scope. And what then is to be expected, but that God's *whole displeasure shall arise*: that he shall whet his sword, and give it a keener edge, and make it fall *yet seven times* heavier upon his *enemies*, than it had e'er before been wont to do? What indeed is to be then expected, but that a new, and infinitely more terrible scene of dread and horror shall appear, an exquisite and perfect state of suffering begin?

And then it is no wonder that we find the *Holy Spirit*, every where in *scripture*, speaking in such dreadful terms of *hell-torments*, and representing them always by those things, which are most terrible to sense. As, that they shall cause *weeping* and *wailing* and *gnashing of teeth*: *tribulation* and *anguish*, *trembling* and *wo*, and all the dismal symptoms of the most intense and fiercest torments: that no man can dwell

Mat. 8. 12.

13. 42.

Rom. 2. 9.

dwell with them: that we should make Ser. 4.
 but a monstrous silly bargain, though, even ^{If. 33. 14.}
 for the *gain of the whole world*, we should ^{Mat. 16.}
sell our *souls* to them: that they were *pre-* ^{26.}
par'd for the *devil* and his *angels*, those ^{Mat. 25.}
 most *impudent* and *outragious* offenders, ^{41.}
 and consequently those most unhappy ob-
 jects of God's hottest wrath; that they are
 set forth to us under the name of *fire*, a ^{Mar. 9. 4.}
devouring fire, *fire* that never shall be ^{Rev. 14. 1.}
quenched, *fire* everlasting: by *fire* and ^{19 2.}
brimstone, by a *lake of fire* and *brim-* ^{Mar. 9. 4.}
stone, by a *worm* that *dyeth* not, &c. ^{46. 4.}
 From all which it is plain, as also from the
 exact proportion that will certainly be, be-
 tween the rewards and punishments of ano-
 ther life, that we may fairly apply those
 words, which were spoken by St. *Paul*, of
 the *joys of heaven*, to the *torments of hell*: ^{1 Cor. 2. 9.}
that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nei-
ther have entred into the heart of man,
those dreadful things, which God hath
prepar'd for them that hate him. But
 this will appear still more clearly, from
 enquiring,

Secondly, *As far as we are able, where-*
in the greatness of hell-torments will con-
sist: I say, *as far as we are able*, because

we

Ser. 4. we are as yet very much in the dark, as to the particulars of our future state. However, as far as the scriptures and plain reasoning will bear me out in this matter, I am sure I may safely venture; and, I hope, I shall take sufficient care to venture no farther. I know very well that this is a subject, upon which good men have been very apt to give a great deal too much scope to their fancies: as St. *Basil* for instance, who fancy'd that, at the *general conflagration* of the world, there will be a separation of the *purser* and more *refin'd* and *noble* parts of all the elements, from the *grosser* and more *ignoble*; that the former shall all ascend to and continue about *heaven*, to minister to the glory and felicity of the saints; but the latter be cast down to *hell*, for the *punishment* of the *damn'd*; that so, as every creature should be matter of joy and comfort to the *blessed*, so on the contrary, every creature should help to aggravate the *torments* of the *damn'd*; and they, who had forsaken God, who is but one, to follow the creatures, who are many, might have a *manifold* punishment, *manifold* tormentors. And these fancies, how ground-
less

Basil. in
Psf. 28.

less soever, yet carrying an appearance of Ser. 4.
religious zeal along with them, are apt to
take too much, and to make too deep an
impression on the belief of a great many
honest-minded christians. And, tho' there
be no great harm in them to men, who
consider them only as fancies and private
opinions, yet, seeing that many christians
are injudicious, and often lay too great
stress upon such fancies, it is best certainly
not to indulge ourselves in them, in dis-
courses upon this subject; but to keep close
to reason and scripture, as I shall endea-
vour to do, in what follows. Now our
reason and scripture make the *greatness* of
hell-torments to consist in these particulars.

First, In the wicked's being banish'd
from the enjoyment of God, and all that
fulness of joy, and those *rivers of pleasure*
which are *in his presence*, and *at his right*
hand for evermore, and in all the miseries
naturally consequent upon such their banish-
ment.

Secondly, In the lashes of their own
guilty minds, and of all those vexatious lusts
and passions, which they shall carry with
them into another world, and which will
be mightily heighten'd and inflam'd there.

Thirdly,

Ser. 4. *Thirdly*, In the loathsomness and uncomfortableness of the place of hell, and the troublesome conversation of the *devil* and *wicked spirits*, which they shall be there confin'd to.

Fourthly, In the pains occasioned by the fire of *hell*, or whatever is meant under that name. And,

Lastly, In the uninterrupted continuance, and eternal duration of every one of these.

First, In the wicked's being banish'd from the enjoyment of God, and all that *fulness of joy*, and *those rivers of pleasure*, which are in his presence, and at his right hand, for evermore, and in all the miseries naturally consequent upon such their banishment. For so runs the former part of that dreadful sentence, which shall be pronounc'd against the wicked, at the day of judgment, *Depart from me, ye cursed*. Not that the wicked shall so depart from God, as never to see or remember him any more, and to lose all knowledge of *him* and *heaven* for ever: No, this, as sad a punishment as it is, would be but a very light one, in comparison of that, which they shall then be doom'd to. They shall see God, or, which is the same thing,

thing, have a most quick and lively notion Ser. 4.
 of him, but without hopes of ever being
 reconcil'd to him; they shall see heaven, or
 at least have always a fresh remembrance
 of that glorious sight which they had of
 it, at the general judgment; but still, as the
 rich man in the gospel did *paradise*, with
 an impassable gulph betwixt it and them.

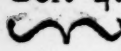
But oh, my soul! How canst thou ever
 sufficiently conceive the dreadfulnes of such
 a departure from God as this is? How
 canst thou, even in any tolerable measure,
 know what thou shalt lose, in losing that
 infinite abyss of happiness? How canst thou
 bear the thoughts of existing, so much as
 one moment, when thou shalt be frown'd
 upon by him, *in whose favour alone is*
life, that is, every thing which makes
 life desirable? Oh! how wilt thou be able
 to endure thy self, when thy *Father*, thy
 most tender and compassionate *Father*, thy
Saviour, thy most loving and relenting *Sa-*
viour, the *holy angels*, and *just men made*
perfect, those best natur'd of created be-
 ings; when the *God of all comfort*, and
giver of every good gift; when he, who
 once lov'd thee so well, as to *lay down his*
life for thee; when they, who have made

it

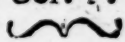
Ser. 4. it their constant business to minister to
~ thee, and have rejoic'd without measure, when they have seen the least hopes of thy becoming happy ; in one word, when all those beings who are good, and continually delight in doing good, and from whom alone all good must come, shall not endure thee, shall detest and abhor thee, shall spurn thee from their presence, shall *laugh at thy calamity, and mock when thy fear cometh* ? Good God ! how will it vex and fret our souls, to reflect upon those bright and glorious mansions of happiness, from which we shall be then banished ? How will the contemplation, even of heaven itself, torment us, when it shall serve only to create in us strong and eager desires and longings after it, which must never be satisfy'd, and to remind us of a loss, which is as infinite as *God* himself ? But, above all, how will it gall and wound our souls, how will it make us all rage and fury against our selves, to consider, that we have lost all this thro' our own fault ; and that when we had it all within our reach, and in our power, we were contented (foolish creatures that we were !) for mere gewgaws and trifles, mere shadows

dows and appearances of happiness, to part Ser. 4.
with it? Certainly, were there no other punishment for the wicked in hell, than this, they would have great reason to say of it, as *Cain* did of his, *it is greater than we can bear*. But,

Secondly, There will be likewise the lashes of their own guilty minds, and of all those vexatious lusts and passions, which they shall carry with them into another world, and will be mightily heighten'd and inflam'd there. By the *worm* of the wicked, which *shall never die*, so often mentioned in scripture as what is to be part of their punishment in *hell*, we are doubtless to understand the remorse of their own guilty minds or consciences, which shall, as it were, gnaw and prey upon them, and give them much greater pain and torment, than a worm preying upon their living flesh would do. Their consciences, I say, which will there be continually and most sensibly reproaching them, not only with the loss of *heaven* (tho' this will be reproach enough) but with all that baseness, ingratitude, unreasonableness, folly, and sinfulness towards God, which they shall have been guilty of in their past lives,

Ser. 4. and with all that shame, anguish, horror,  inconceivable and endless misery, which they shall thereby have brought upon their own heads. And, as we are sure, from the nature of the thing itself, that, when the wicked shall no longer be clothed with such bodies of flesh, as they are now, which mightily obstruct and press down the soul in her operations; but shall put on spiritual bodies, bodies in which their souls may freely and uncontrollably exert their utmost powers, their apprehensions and resentments of things must necessarily become vastly more quick and vigorous; and consequently their sense of their own folly, guilt and misery, and their remorse, anguish and trouble for them, exceeding more keen and poignant, than they had ever been in this world. So have we all the reason that can be to believe, that the divine vengeance will both add new stings to these their own inbred tormentors, and (as I have before proved to you, it sometimes does with the *wounded spirits* of sinners, even in this world) whet and sharpen, in a supernatural manner, the points of their old ones. So that, whereas in this world their consciences did only chastise them

them

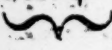
them with whips, they shall there chastise Ser. 4.
them with scorpions. 

Besides this, some divines have been of opinion that wicked men shall carry their appetites and lustings after sensual pleasures into *hell* along with them, and there, to their unspeakable torment, continually burn with the most raging and vehement desires and longings after these things, which yet at the same time they shall be infallibly as-
sur'd, it shall never in the least be in their power to enjoy. But this seeming not very agreeable to the notion of those spiritual bodies which the wicked shall be clothed with in a future state, I shall not insist upon it, but only suppose, what I think very probable, that the wicked shall retain in *hell* a *remembrance* of those pleasures Luke 16.
which they once enjoy'd in this world, in ^{25.}
their bodies of flesh; and that this *remem-
brance* shall be extremely grateful and
pleasing to them, and put them upon wish-
ing most earnestly, that they were again to
be clothed with such bodies, again to act over
the same pleasures; which having long ac-
custom'd themselves to, the full bent and
inclinations of their souls has been long
wholly set towards them, and has made

Ser. 4. them utterly incapable of relishing or delighting in any other. And, if there shall be any such eager longings and hankerings after bodies of *flesh*, and the pleasures belonging to them ; these, join'd with an utter despair of ever obtaining what they so much long for, must needs be an unsupportable torment to the *damn'd*.

But be this as it will, it is certain both from reason and scripture, that the wicked shall be subject to all those peevish and uneasy passions in *hell*, which are purely spiritual, as *pride, envy, malice, anger, hatred, fear, self-revenge, &c.* and moreover, shall have all these in a much higher degree there, much more troublesome and vexatious to them, than they were in this world. All these we find ascrib'd to the *devil* and his *angels*, spiritual beings in scripture ; and indeed it is inconceivable to reason, how wicked souls can exist without them ; and these being pure spiritual passions, or passions of the mind considered abstractedly from the body, must needs grow and increase, as we become more and more spiritualiz'd. Besides, that the objects of these vexatious passions will be infinitely enlarged to the *damn'd* in *hell*,
and

and that they will there meet with the most Ser. 4.
provoking occasions of raising and enflam-
ing their passions to the utmost; and yet
at the same time, with the most tormenting
balks and disappointments to them, that
can possibly be imagin'd. Did the envious
man grow big and swell with envy here,
at the sight of the earthly prosperity of
his brethren? He will even burst with it
there, at the contemplation of the happi-
ness of the saints in heaven. Did the ma-
licious man hate and malign those who ne-
ver did him much hurt here? Oh! how will
he rage and flame out with hatred and ill-
will against all those malicious beings, his
companions in *hell*, who shall *continually*
be doing him all the mischief that they are
able there? Did not the proud man know
how to brook any, even the smallest disap-
pointments here? Alas! he shall meet with
nothing else but disappointments, and those
too of the highest kind; there; there, I
say, where he shall be sure of having eve-
ry such thing as he would not, and no one
such thing as he would. Was the angry
man apt to be soon put into a passion here,
by little crosses and vexations? He will
there be continually heated, fired, nay, even

Ser. 4.  made and kept red-hot, by a constant series of great ones. To say all at once, the fears of the wicked, shall be there heightened into despair, their displeasure against themselves into the utmost indignation; and the most exasperated rage, fretfulness and bitterness of soul, the most unmix'd sorrow, irksomness and self-aborrancy, the keenest anger and revenge shall, be the *portion of their cup*. So that indeed wicked men seem to carry compleat misery into *hell* along with them, while they carry such appetites, as, tho' never so eager and craving, cannot in the least there be satisfied: such passions, as, tho' never so vexatious and intolerable, cannot in the least be pacified and allay'd there. And yet this misery will still be enhanc'd.

Thirdly, By the loathsomness and uncomfortableness of the place of *hell*, and the troublesome conversation of the *devil* and *wicked spirits*, which the *damn'd* shall be there confin'd to. Where-ever the place of hell shall be, which as *St. Gregory* saith, *I dare not rashly determine*, and as *St. Austin*, *I believe no man knows, but him, to whom the Divine Spirit has particularly reveal'd it*; where-ever it shall be

be

be (whether in the *center* of the earth, as Ser. 4. some have thought, or upon this *very* earth upon which we now live, and which will have been the scene of all the villanies of the wicked, as others; or lastly, in a *space* beyond and without this *world* (as some have fancy'd from that text of *Job* xviii. 12. *That the wicked shall be chas'd out of the world*) there can be no doubt but it will be very dismal; agreeable to the company and business which it is design'd for. And the scriptures have said enough of it, stiling it *darkness*, *utter darkness*, *the blackness of darkness* (a thing most ungrateful to human nature) to give us a most loathsome and abominable notion of it. Tho' probably, this darkness shall not be wholly without a mixture of light; but then it will be a light, even worse than darkness it self, a light which will only help us to see such sad and rueful spectacles, as will mightily add to our *misery*, and which we shall heartily wish might be *hid from our eyes for ever*.

Then, as to the *company* of *hell*, we know that this is wholly made up of *devils* and *wicked men*; and these being

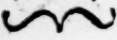
Ser. 4. all most *malicious* and *ill-natured* beings, and besides, such as we shall then be sensible, have been highly *instrumental* in drawing us into this *place of torment*; and moreover, some of them such, as are to be our *very tormentors*; the bare sight of them must needs be extremely odious and uneasy to the wicked. And nothing can be expected from such company, but continual *jangling, hatred, anger, snarling and biting* at one another; nothing but the most terrible *fears* and *jealousies* of the most *malicious* and *spiteful bickerings* against each other. And, good God! if it be thought so very irksome a thing here, to be obliged to spend only a few hours in company that is disagreeable, how shall we ever be able to bear the thoughts of taking up our dwelling amongst that hellish crew, who study nothing else, day and night, than how they may be best able to provoke and exasperate each other, to the highest degree possible.

Besides, the damn'd must needs be very ghastly and doleful spectacles to each other, and their perpetual *weeping, wailing, sighing, howling* and loud *out-cries*, occasioned by their torments, must needs be
very

very dreadful and affecting. So far will it be, in this case, from being any comfort to us to have companions in our misery, that this very thing will be a great addition to our torments. Oh! how sadly shall we read our own miseries, in the melancholy countenances of every one of our companions? How terrible and killing must the sound of those groans and complaints needs be, which are, as it were, but the faint of echos of our own? What an hideous, what an heart-breaking consort of woes, must that be, which comes from an innumerable company of poor unhappy wretches, labouring under the sharp pangs of a *wounded conscience*, and a mind gall'd and fretted by all the most vexatious passions; and yet farther, burning and scorching in the flames of hell-fire. Which is the

Fourth thing, which I propos'd to speak to. And here I must freely confess that I cannot see any manner of reason, why we should suppose that the fire of hell will not be real and material, but only a metaphorical and figurative fire. On the contrary I think, that the scriptures constantly expressing it as real, and not so much as in one place, that I know of, departing

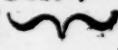
Ser. 4.
~

 Ser. 4. ing from this way of expressing it, or favouring any other way of understanding it, is a very good reason why we should believe it so to be. Certainly nothing, if it were purposely study'd and design'd could serve more effectually to satisfy our minds in this point, than the parable of the *rich man* in the gospel; who is there represented as *burning* in a *material* fire in hell, and begging for *water* to *cool* his *tongue*, an expression properly belonging only to a material fire.

Luke 16.

If it be said, that the torments of hell are sometimes express'd in scripture, by other things than that of fire: and that therefore fire is to be understood not properly but figuratively; I answer, that there are other torments of hell, besides those of fire, and that these are they which are express'd by those other things; as that of a *guilty conscience* in particular, which is represented, in the text from which these men fetch this argument, by a *worm that dyeth not*: but which is there plainly represented as a thing different from the fire of hell: *Where the worm dyeth not, and the fire is not quenck'd.*

And

And if it be farther urg'd that the fire of Ser. 4. hell being said in scripture to be *prepar'd*  *for the devil and his angels*, spiritual beings, and allotted to wicked men, not till after the resurrection, when they shall have receiv'd their spiritual bodies, we cannot possibly take it to be material fire: because it is utterly inconceivable to reason, how such fire can any way affect such beings. I shall think it enough to answer, that our notions of the nature of *angels*, and of our own spiritual bodies; as also of that fire which shall be in hell, supposing it to be a material fire, are but very dark and imperfect, and consequently not to be argu'd from with any great certainty; and moreover, that it does not seem at all more wonderful that spirits should be affected by such fire, than that they should be united to bodies of flesh, and affected and influenced by them, as we are sure our souls now are, though we know not how. *Why*, De Civit. Dei, l. 21. c. 10, *saith St. Austin, may we not say that spirits may be tormented by corporeal fire, when it is plain that the souls of men are now included in bodily members, after a wonderful indeed, but yet real manner?*

However,

Ser. 4. However, be this as it will, it is agreed on all hands, that the *torments*, design'd under the name of fire, will be very great and insupportable, and not less to be sure than those of material fire would be, but rather vastly greater. It being not usual in scripture, when speaking of the things of another life, to represent them by things greater than themselves, but frequently, I believe we may say always, by lesser.

I shall but just mention one thing more under this head; and that is, that both the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, did suppose another torment for the wicked, directly contrary to this of burning, *viz. extream cold*; and made the element of water as well as that of fire, as the *deluge* as well as the *fire and brimstone* did of old, contribute to their *punishment*. And St. *Jerom*, who without doubt had this notion from the *Jews*, explains those words of *Job* xxiv. 19. (as they are render'd by the *vulgar Latin*.) *He shall pass from waters of snow to excessive heat*; to this purpose, *Job*, saith he, *seems to me to speak here of two hills, or places of torment, fire and cold: perhaps in hell the torments of the damn'd will be of that nature, that they will sometimes feel*

feel excessive heat, and at other times as Ser. 4. excessive cold. Nay, and some learned men strive to draw what our Saviour saith, of the *gnashing of the teeth* of the wicked in hell, to countenance this notion: as if that were nothing else but a *knocking of their teeth together*, occasion'd by extreme shivering cold. And it must be acknowledged that the *βρυσηὶς τοῦ ὀδόντων*, which we translate *gnashing of teeth*, is sometimes us'd in prophane authors, to signify that knocking of the teeth together, which is occasion'd by the *shiverings* of an ague. And then as to the *heathens*, it is Plato. well known that of their *two rivers*, into Phædo which the *damn'd* were to be thrown, the Max. Tyr. Dissertat. one *Peripheregethon* was extreme hot, and 29. the other *Cocytus*, or *Acheron*, extreme cold. And the *Mahometans* likewise have pick'd up this notion, and inserted it into their *Alcoran*. But there being little or no ground for this in *scripture*, I shall be contented with just mentioning it, and pass on to consider the last aggravating circumstances of the torments of the *damn'd*, viz.

Fifthly, The *uninterrupted* continuance, and *eternal* duration of them. For so the scripture tells us, that *the smoke of Rev. 14. the* 11.

*Ser. 4. the torment of the wicked ascendeth up
 for ever and ever, and that they have no
 rest day nor night; and again that they
 shall be tormented day and night for ever*

*Rev. 20.
 10.*

*and ever. And what a dreadful addition
 will this be to the torments of the damn'd,
 that they shall be without intermission,
 and without end? Will not the very
 thoughts of this give a keener edge to all
 their sufferings, and be a kind of new hell
 to them. But I shall say no more of this
 here, because I design to treat particularly
 of the eternity of hell-torments, in my fol-
 lowing discourses; and under that shall
 have occasion to say something of the un-
 interrupted continuance of them.*

It remains only that I draw some few
 inferences from what has been said and so
 conclude. And,

First, It seems very obvious to observe
 that the greatness of hell-torments is a full
 answer to that difficulty about the dispen-
 sations of providence, as to the prosperity
 of wicked men in this world: since it is
 plain from hence, that, however provi-
 dence may suffer them to flourish here for
 a while; yet it will be sure to be even
 with them, at the long run, even to the
 uttermost

uttermoſt farthing. So that wicked men Ser. 4. can have no reaſonable encouragement to go on in their ſins, nor good men to envy the worldly proſperity of the wicked, *be- Eccleſ. 8. cauſe ſentence againſt an evil work is not 11, 12, 13. ſpeedily executed.* For, as the wiſe man ſpeaks, *though a ſinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolong'd, yet ſure I know that it ſhall not be well with the wicked.* God indeed is rich in goodneſs, and forbearance, and long-ſuffering toward the wicked, being deſirous by theſe to lead them to *repentance.* But, if they deſpiſe theſe, and ſtill continue hard and impenitent in their hearts; they then only *treafure up to themſelves wrath againſt Rom. 2. 4, the day of wrath, and revelation of the 5, 6, 8, 9. righteous judgment of God,* who will certainly, ſooner or later, render to every man according to his deeds, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguiſh upon every ſoul of man that doth evil.

Secondly, The greatneſs of hell-torments is a *plain proof,* both of the infinite wiſdom and infinite goodneſs of God; his wiſdom, in guarding and ſecuring his own laws, honour and authority, with the threatenings of ſuch dreadful puniſhments, as are ſufficient

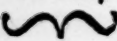
Ser. 4. sufficient to keep his creatures in awe of him, and prevent their rebellion against him; his goodness, in making damnation so very terrible a thing, that if men would but well consider and seriously attend to it, would be, morally speaking, impossible for any one man ever to be *damn'd*. God indeed has made his *terrors* strong and powerful enough to *perswade men*, and to *deter* them from complying with the most alluring temptations to do evil. So that if, after all, men will be *damn'd*, they must e'en take their damnation to themselves, and acknowledge that God was *unwilling that they should perish*, since he has done *abundantly enough* to scare men from coming so much as near the borders of hell: all indeed that he could do, without laying such a force and necessity upon men, as is by no means agreeable to their nature, as *free agents*.

Thirdly, Since it has been evidently made out, that the torments of hell will certainly be *inconceivably great*, what signifieth it to be mighty *nice* and *curious* in enquiring into the *nature*, and *particular kinds* of them. That, in the general they will be *inconceivably great*, this is surely
motive

motive enough to us, to use our utmost Ser. 4.
endeavours for the avoiding of them: and
this is the great use of our knowledge of
them. At least, if this be not sufficient, it
is to be fear'd that a more particular know-
ledge, if it could be had, would not much
mend the matter.

Fourthly, From what has been said con-
cerning the nature of hell-torments, we
should learn to be extremely careful, not to
cherish our selves, and make as it were *ha-
bitual* and *con-natural* to us, any trouble-
some lusts and passions in this world. For,
besides that God will inflict punishments
upon us hereafter for so doing, these lusts
and passions will go themselves into ano-
ther world, along with us, and there *be-
come* our *tormentors*; nay, and moreover
get new and infinitely sharper strings there,
than they had here. They are indeed an
hell growing up within us: and sure seeds
of wo and misery, which shall spring up
and break froth in a plentiful crop, in the
devil's kingdom.

Lastly, From the consideration of the
greatness of hell-torments, appears the vast
disproportion that there is, between the
pleasures of sin, and the pains or punish-

Ser. 4. ments of it. The one faint and languid,  the other quick and lively to the highest degree: the one uncertain, rare and fugitive, the other constant, fix'd and permanent: the one frequently broken and interrupted, the other without relaxation or intermission: the one mightily mix'd and allay'd, the other pure and unmingled: the one always below our conception and expectation of it, the other above all conception or apprehension: the one limited within narrow bounds, the other next to infinite: the one but *for a season*, the other *for all eternity*. Were we to weigh only the temporal pains and inconveniencies of sin, against the pleasures of it: I doubt not but we should find these full heavy enough to turn the balance against them; but, when to these we add that black *after-reckoning* which awaits sinners in another world, that sad *eternity* of woe which is there laid up for them, good God! how infinitely do they outweigh them?

And how then, in the name of reason, can it possibly come to pass that we should find the pleasures of sin so much courted and esteem'd, and the *punishments* of it so much slighted and *disregarded*? How can it

it possibly be, that beings, endow'd with Ser. 4.
sound understanding and discretion, should
 be content to sell themselves to unspeak-
 able and everlasting misery, only for the
 trifling and perishing enjoyments of this
 life? It cannot be from any other cause,
 than their want of making a right use of
 that judgment which God has given them:
 It could never be, would they, but every
 now and then, seriously consider with them-
 selves, what the *end of those men shall be*, ^{2 Thess. 1.}
that obey not the gospel of Christ, and sin-^{8.}
 cerely ask themselves, how they shall be
 able to drink *of the wine of the wrath of* ^{Rev. 14.}
God, when it shall be pour'd out, without ^{10.}
mixture, into the cup of indignation.

Oh! let us then frequently, with an *eye*
of faith, take a *view* of the *torments* of
hell: and then we shall be most ready to
 do or suffer any thing, for the avoiding of
 them: to *pluck out a right eye*, to *cut off*
a right hand, that is, to part with any
 thing, however dear and precious to us, ra-
 ther than our *whole body should be cast in-* ^{Matt. 5.}
to hell. And how inviting soever the plea-^{29, 30.}
 sures of sin, or the company of sinners may
 outwardly appear to be: yet let us, at our
 utmost *peril*, *beware* of them. For, as

Ser. 4. the son of Sirach truly observes, the con-
Eccles. 21. gregation of the wicked is like tow wrap-
9, 10. ped together, and the end of them is a
flame of fire to destroy them. And, tho'
the way of sinners be made plain with
stones, yet at the end thereof is the pit of
hell.





S E R M O N V.

Preach'd before King *William*
at *Kensington*, Jan. 1701.

The Eternity of Hell-Torments.

MATTHEW XXV. 41.

*Then shall he say unto them on the
left hand, depart from me, ye curs-
ed, into everlasting fire, prepared
for the devil and his angels.*



Now come to the *last* thing,
which I propos'd to treat of
from these words, *viz.* the
eternity of hell-torments,
which I shall consider in this
following method.

K 3

First,

Ser. 5.

First, I will prove, from several plain texts of scripture, that the torments of hell will be truly and properly eternal, or have a duration without end.

Secondly, I will lay before you the arguments, which are drawn from reason, in proof of this point.

Thirdly, I will more particularly explain to you, what we are to understand by the *eternity* of hell-torments: in order to obviate those false meanings, which the *Socinians* and others give of several of those texts of scripture, upon which we build our belief of it.

Lastly, I will answer the most material objections, against the eternity of hell-torments, and so conclude.

The two first of these will, I doubt, take up all that time, which your patience will allow me at present. And indeed they are both very material and important subjects, by no means slightly to be pass'd over: especially at this time, when the *eternity* of hell-torments is so much call'd in question, and that too by those men, who value themselves upon their being critical interpreters of scripture, and exact masters of reason.

But,

But, in order to shew either that their Ser. 5. skill, or something else, is not always so good as it should be, I shall hasten,

First, To prove, from several plain texts of scripture, that the torments of hell will be truly and properly *eternal*, or have a duration without end. And, for this purpose, I desire you seriously to consider these following texts.

Who amongst us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who amongst us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? that is, saith the *Jewish Targum* upon the place, *with the eternal fire of hell.* Isaiah xxxiii. 14. *And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt:*

a text which many of the best of the *Jewish* expositors understand, of the *general resurrection*, and the *eternal rewards and punishments*, which shall then be bestow'd upon good and bad men. Dan. xii. 2. *To*

be cast into everlasting fire, Matt. xviii. 8.

Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, Matt. xxiv. 41. and in the 46th verse of the same chapter, *These, the wicked, shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eter-*

Ser. 5. *nal. Eternal damnation*, Mark ix. 29. *A worm that dyeth not, and a fire that shall never be quenched*, Mark ix. 43, 44, 45, 46, 48. *Everlasting destruction*, 2 Theff. i. 9. *Eternal judgment*, Heb. vi. 2. *the blackness of darkness for ever*, Jude xiii. and Revel. xiv. 11. *The smoke of the wicked ascendeth up for ever and ever*; and again, 20. 10. *They shall be tormented for ever and ever*. Concerning which texts, there are these three things well worthy our observation.

First, That the very same words are us'd in them, to express the *eternity* of *hell-torments*, which are us'd in scripture to express the *eternity* of the *joys of heaven*, nay, and even God himself. For so the same word, which is us'd to express the *everlastingness* of the *burnings of hell*, and of the contempt of the wicked, in the above cited texts of the prophets *Isaiah* and *Daniel*, is us'd to express the *eternity* of God himself, in many places of the *Old Testament*. And, throughout the whole *New Testament*, the same word is constantly us'd to express *everlasting life*, the *everlasting God*, and *everlasting fire*, *everlasting punishment*, *everlasting destruction*,

Gen. 21.

33.

Isa. 40. 28.

Rom. 6. 22.

Rom. 16.

26.

Mat. 25.

41, 46.

2 Theff. 1.

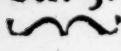
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Mar. 3. 29.

struction, eternal damnation, &c. Since Ser. 5. then it is universally allow'd, that these words, when apply'd to *God* and the joys of *heaven*, denote a true and proper *eternity*: why must they not have the same sense, when apply'd to the *torments* of *hell*?

I know it will be answer'd that, though these words are frequently us'd in scripture to signify a true and proper *eternity*, yet they are not always us'd so: but sometimes signify only a diuturnity, or very long duration of time, which shall have an end, though perhaps not till many ages are past; and that therefore there can be no necessity of understanding them here of a strict and proper *eternity*. And why then should we not choose to take the favourable side? Why should it not be sufficient to allow, that the torments of hell will be, in some sense, *eternal*, that is, of very long duration and continuance, though not strictly and properly everlasting?

Now, though I readily grant that the words are sometimes us'd, in this sense of a diuturnity or very long duration only: yet I must observe, that it is very rarely that they are so us'd, more especially in the *New Testament*; and moreover that
my

 Ser. 5. my two remaining observations, upon the above quoted texts of scripture, will afford us very good reasons, why this sense will not do in our present case. I observe therefore,

Secondly, That the very same words are us'd, in the very same texts of scripture, to express the *everlasting happiness* of the *righteous*, and the *everlasting misery* of the *wicked*, and that too, without the least intimation of any kind, that the words are not to have the same sense on both sides. For so, in *Daniel*, the very same word is us'd to express the *everlastingness* of the *life* or *happiness* of the *righteous*, and of the *contempt* or *misery* of the *wicked*; and so, in *St. Matthew*, the very same word expresseth both. *These*, the wicked, *shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal or everlasting*, αἰώνιον the very same word in both places. So that there is not the least pretence for setting up two different senses of the words, in these places. On the contrary, the Holy spirit seems to have us'd the same word, both of the *happiness* of the *righteous*, and the *misery* of the *wicked*, in the same places, on purpose that

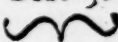
that we might have no manner of handle Ser. 5. for making a difference as to the *eternity* of these, but might be constrain'd to own the one, by owning the other.

Thirdly, We have, in the afore-mention'd texts, repeated assertions of, and variety of expressions for, the *eternity* of hell-torments: and all very full and significant, it is not only said over and over again, that they are *everlasting*: but they are represented as a *worm that dyeth not*, and a *fire that shall never be quenched*; nay, there is one expression, of their lasting for ever and ever, which is not so much as once us'd, throughout the whole New Testament, to signify any thing less than a true and proper *eternity*. So that, upon the whole, God seems to have express'd his mind to us as fully and clearly, in *this point*, as *words can do it*: and we must be strangely obstinate and partial to ourselves, if, because we do not like the *eternity* of hell-torments, we will not believe it, though never so plainly reveal'd to us.

To what has been said I shall farther add, that we have the judgment of almost the whole christian church in all ages, on our side, as to this point; very few of all the fathers

Ser. 5. fathers of the church, having favoured the contrary opinion ; and *Origen* having been severely *reprov'd* and *animadverted* upon by the rest of the *fathers* for so doing, and his opinion, in this particular always' reckon'd, by St. *Austin*, *Epiphanius* and other *Cataloguers* of the ancient *Heresies*, as *heretical*. And this consideration ought, one would think, to weigh very much with private christians, and to keep them from going, *hastily* at least, against the common and constant sense of the primitive and purest times of *christianity*, into the opinions of a *new* and *upstart* sect, who, having first *divested* our *Lord* of his *divinity*, it is no great wonder that they afterwards endeavour to disarm him of his *thunder*, and to *blunt* the *edge* of his *threatnings*.

However, should we suppose at present (I say *suppose*, for it is what I can by no means *allow*, all circumstances consider'd) that the words, which are used in scripture to express the *eternity* of hell-torments, might be indifferently taken, either for a true and proper eternity, or a *diuturnity* or *long duration* only, and refer it to *reason*, which sense we should *choose* ; I doubt not but even *reason* it self would
deter-

determine on *our* side, in this case. As Ser. 5. will more clearly appear, when I come, 

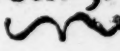
Secondly, To lay before you the arguments, which are drawn from *reason*, for proof of the eternity of hell-torments. And this I shall do, with great freedom and impartiality ; having first premis'd these two things.

First, That I do not pretend to argue altogether from pure *simple* reason, but from reason judging of this matter, as propos'd with *all its circumstances*, by *revelation*. For tho' I will not say, that reason of itself was sufficient for the finding out, and certainly fixing and determining this point ; yet I shall make no doubt to say that, as this is offered to our consideration by *revelation*, *reason* doth consent to, and approve it. 'Tis true indeed, that some of the heathens, by the mere *light* of *reason*, did frame some sort of notion of the *eternity* of hell-torments ; but then it must be considered, that this was both very rare, and very *imperfect*. Generally speaking, they held certain periods of time, a *thousand* years, &c. when all the wicked should be *releas'd* from their torments. And those of them, who did maintain the *eternity*

Ser. 5. *nity* of hell-torments, yet maintain'd it only as to the most *beinous* and *notorious* sinners, but allowed *all others*, of a lower degree, after a duration of their torments, proportionable to their crimes, and sufficient, as they imagin'd, for their *purgation* or *lustration*, to be freed from them.

Secondly, That I do by no means lay the *stress* of this cause upon *reason*, but *scripture*. For it cannot be deny'd, that the *everlastingness* of hell-torments, depends very much upon the free will and pleasure of God, which cannot *certainly* and *undoubtedly* be known any other way than by *revelation*. And therefore my great end in using these arguments from reason, is to prove to those men who pretend such a mighty regard for *reason*, that *reason* is so far from contradicting the scripture in this point, that it does very much countenance and confirm it; but not to put the proof of this matter wholly upon reason, which, beyond all question, has its only *sure* and *incontestable* proof, from *revelation*.

These things being premis'd, I proceed to lay before you the arguments, commonly

monly urg'd from *reason* on this behalf. Ser. 5.
And, 

First, It is alledg'd, that sin being an offence against an *eternal* God, ought according to the strict rules of justice, which require that the punishments of offenders should bear proportion to the dignity of the person offended, to have *eternal* torments for its *punishment*.

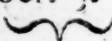
But here I will freely own, that I cannot see the force of this argument; nor do I at all apprehend the necessity of having a sinner's punishment *eternal*, because God is so; nor was it ever practis'd among men, as a proper rule and measure of punishing, to make the punishments of offenders of equal duration, as far as they were able, with the lives or beings of the persons offended. I readily grant, that in punishing offenders, great regard ought to be had to the dignity of the person offended; but then, there are other ways of shewing this regard than by thus lengthening out their punishment; as by the intenseness and extraordinary height and acuteness of those torments, which are allotted them for their punishment, &c.

Besides,

Ser. 5. Besides, if this argument proves any thing, it proves a great deal too much. For, if the punishment of every sin must be *eternal*, because God is so; then, by the same reason, the punishment of every sin must be *infinite* likewise, because God is so too. And if the punishment of every sin must be *infinite* and *eternal*, because it is an offence against an *infinite* and *eternal* God; then all degrees of punishment must necessarily be taken away (there being no such thing as degrees in *infinite* and *eternal*) which yet is directly contrary both to *reason* and *scripture*. Moreover, at this rate of arguing, the rewards of good men, as well as the punishments of bad, must necessarily be *infinite* and *eternal*. For they, having serv'd an *infinite* and *eternal* God, ought according to the strict rules of *justice*, which require, that *rewards*, as well as *punishments*, should bear a *proportion* to the dignity of the person whom we serve, to have an *infinite* and *eternal* reward. And if so, this will mightily take off from the free grace of God, so much magnified in *scripture*, upon account of the *exceeding greatness* and *eternity* of those *rewards*, which he has there

there promised to his *faithful servants*; Ser. 5. since these, it seems, are but a *just* and *necessary debt* to them, if they are to be *rewarded at all*.

But tho' I cannot by any means allow all that some men would infer from this argument; yet thus much I cannot help observing upon it, that a sinner's *daring* to offend a God of *infinite* and *eternal* majesty, who shall *ever* live, and have it in his *power* to take *vengeance* of him, to *what degree* he *pleaseth*; and moreover, a God to whom he owes all that he has, or is, and who has laid numberless and most powerful obligations upon him, to *serve* and *please* him, to the *utmost* of his ability; and to offend such a God, not once or twice only, but frequently, and by a continued course of disobedience; not thro' chance or mistake, but voluntarily and of set purpose: A sinner's daring to do all this, I say, is such monstrous *folly*, *ingratitude* and *presumption* altogether, such an impudent and often repeated provocation and defiance of *divine vengeance*, that we must needs own it to be a *sufficient ground* for, and *justification* of, God's punishing

Ser. 5.  nothing sinners *eternally*, if he shall so think fit.

And, if it be universally acknowledg'd to be lawful and just among men, for very great and outrageous crimes, to inflict such punishments upon offenders, as shall affect the whole duration of their lives, which is all of their *beings* that we have any power over; it cannot sure be thought unjust in God to inflict such punishments upon sinners, as shall affect the whole duration of their *beings*; all which he has full power over: there being plainly in this case as much difference in the *greatness* of the *crimes*, as in the *duration* of the punishments.

Secondly, It must be consider'd that sin is a voluntary refusal and contempt of *eternal happiness*, and, upon that account, richly deserves *eternal misery* for its punishment; according to that of St. *Austin*,
 De Civit. Dei, l. 21. *That man is well worthy of eternal punishments, who hinders himself from becoming eternally happy.* And indeed it cannot be deny'd, that the *eternity* of the joys of *heaven* makes the belief of the *eternity* of the *torments* of *hell* fit much easier upon our minds, than it would otherwise

wife have done. Had the *eternity* been Ser. 5.
only on the punishing side, this would have
look'd hard, and not altogether agreeable
to our notions of the divine *goodness*; but
being on the rewarding side likewise, we
have here *infinite goodness* and *infinite jus-*
tice set one against the other; and what rea-
son can any man possibly have to complain
of this? Nay, the very *eternity* of the
joys of heaven is an *intimation*, and kind
of *presumptive proof* of the *eternity* of
the *torments of hell*; inasmuch as we are
sure that God is every whit as much an ene-
my to vice, as he is a friend to virtue;
and have therefore all the reason that can
be to expect, that he will exert himself
every whit as much, in the punishing of
the one, as in the rewarding of the other.

When God has been so abundantly gra-
cious, as out of his own *free* goodness and
loving kindness, to offer everlasting hap-
piness to mankind, if they will accept of
it; is it not very reasonable to suppose,
that he will to the utmost resent their re-
fusal and contempt of the riches of this his
goodness? Is it not very natural to believe,
that he will give the contemners of ever-
lasting happiness, everlasting cause to re-

Ser. 5. member, bewail and repent of this their folly? Doth it not seem very just, that he should everlastingly keep them in being, that so they may to all *eternity* think on that everlasting happiness which they have refus'd; and that, by making them feel what an *eternity* of *woe* is, they may be sensible to the utmost what they have lost, in losing an *eternity* of *happiness*?

Thirdly, It is farther urg'd, that sinners, tho' not actually, yet in will and intention, do sin *eternally*; and therefore ought, in all justice, to suffer *eternal* punishment. For tho', because God allows sinners but a *temporal* life in *this* state of *trial* and *probation*, they have it not in their power to sin actually to all *eternity*; yet this is no thank to them, who, in all probability, were they to live here *eternally*, would *eternally* go on in their sins. And it *be-*
comes the great justice of our Judge, saith
 St. Gregory, *that they, who in this life*
would never be without sin, should in the
next never be without punishment. And
 indeed, what is here alledg'd, is certainly
 true *thus far*, viz. that sinners do *volun-*
tarily contract, and settle themselves in, such
 wicked habits, as, without the assistance

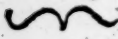
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of

of God's *grace*, which may very reason-
 ably be deny'd to them, who have so often
 affronted and done despite to his *Holy Spi-*
rit, do naturally infer a *necessity* of sin-
 ning everlastingly. I do not say, that
 sinners formally *design* to sin, as long as
 they can: I believe the quite contrary,
 that most sinners propose to themselves,
 one time or other, to leave their sins; but
 however, since they wilfully, and well
 knowing the danger of this consequence,
 engage and persevere in such habits, as,
 without the assistance of the *Holy Spirit*,
 must bring them under a *necessity* of sin-
 ning everlastingly; and moreover, have so
 often anger'd and abus'd, griev'd and
 quench'd the *Holy Spirit*, while it was of-
 fering its assistance to them, and even pray-
 ing and importuning them to accept of it,
 that they may very reasonably be suppos'd
 quite to have driven it from them: it is
 plain that they have done all that is neces-
 sary on their part, toward the making
 themselves *eternal* sinners. And then, what
 assurance can reason give, that God will
 not think fit to construe them such, and to
 deal with them accordingly?

Ser. 5. Others have thought to carry this matter yet farther, by saying, that in hell the wicked shall go on to sin, to bear an *ill-will* to God, and to *blaspheme* him, &c. and consequently shall very justly suffer *eternal* torments, for sinning actually to all *eternity*. And this they endeavour to prove by two texts of scripture, one, *Psalms* lxxiii. 8, 9, 11. *They, the wicked, speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens, and they say, how doth God know? is there knowledge in the most High?* the other, *Rev.* xvi. 9. *And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues, and they repented not to give him glory.* Now, tho' these texts do by no means prove what they are brought for, because they both certainly relate to the behaviour of the wicked in this world; yet, I believe, the substance of what these men aim at, *viz.* that the wicked shall continue in *hell* to act wickedly, will be deny'd by no body; both because it is plain that they carry a wicked and wretchedly depraved nature with them, out of this world into the other, and we have no reason to think that it will not continue the same there

there that it was here ; and also, because Ser. 5. the scriptures constantly represent the *devil* and his *angels* (and I suppose the case of wicked men will be much the same in hell) as utter enemies to every thing that is good, and extremely pleas'd and delighted with every thing that is bad. But then it must be considered, that how wicked forever the *damn'd* may be in *hell*, they will not suffer upon account of the wickedness which they shall act there, that being no place of *tryal* and *probation*, of *merit* or *demerit* (as the school-men love to speak) but upon account of their having so *habituated* themselves to wickedness in this world, that they have thereby brought upon themselves this necessary consequence of sinning everlastingly in the other. So that tho', strictly speaking, their sinning in hell everlastingly, in it self consider'd, is not a reason why they should be everlastingly punished ; yet, consider'd in its cause, as proceeding from mens voluntary behaviour in this life, which was a state of *tryal* and *probation*, and as it has, thro' their own fault, made them proper objects of God's everlasting wrath, by making

Ser. 5.  them everlasting actual sinners, it seems to be a very good reason for it.

Fourthly, Another argument for the belief of the eternity of hell-torments, is taken from the consideration of the good that some divines have thought may be everlastingly done by them, to the angels and saints in another life, to whom, they think, they will be a most powerful motive, to use all possible care to keep their glorious stations, and to take heed of falling from their mansions of bliss. And indeed, if we can have reason to suppose that the blessed in *heaven* can, any way, be profited by the *eternal* sufferings of the *damn'd*, this will give a very good account of, and consequently a very strong argument for, their suffering everlastingly.

But it will be said, Shall there then be any danger after this life, of the *angels* and *saints* not keeping their blessed estate? Will not their time of *trial* and *probation* be then over, the reign of the old *tempter* at an end, and consequently their danger at an end too? I answer distinctly, first as to the *angels*, and *then* as to *just men made perfect*, because there is a great deal of *difference* in their cases.

As
177

As to the *angels*; I conceive their case Ser. 5.
will always be just the same that it was, when they fell before. They had then no *tempter*, any more than they will have now; they had all motives, as far as we know, as strong then as they will have now, to beware of rebelling against God, and, by so doing, of *forfeiting* their happy estate, and moreover making themselves liable to the extremest misery; and yet, notwithstanding all this, it is plain in fact, that they did make a shift to fall from *heaven* and *happiness*. The addition therefore of some new motive, in order to make them more secure in the everlasting possession of their happiness, seems to be very proper for them; and what motive can be added more effectual for this purpose, than the sight of those everlasting torments, which shall certainly be the portion of all those who shall dare to offend God, and into which therefore they must certainly fall, if ever they fall from *heaven*? It may be said indeed, that allowing all this to be so; yet the everlasting damnation of the *fallen angels* only, those of their own kind, may be *sufficient* to warn and everlastingly keep the angels in heaven fearful and careful

Ser. 5. careful to the utmost, lest they should
 ~~~~~ fall. And I readily grant that so it may.  
 But then, if besides they shall plainly see  
 the wicked of the race of mankind, whom  
 God loved so well as to send *his Son in-*  
*to the world, to seek and to save them,*  
*sentenc'd to everlasting damnation like-*  
*wise ;* this will still make the motive to  
 them to beware of falling so much the  
 stronger, and be a yet fuller conviction to  
 them, that there cannot possibly be the  
 least hope of rebelling against God, and  
 yet escaping his righteous judgment for  
 evermore.

Next, *as to just men made perfect ;* I  
 make no doubt but that they will be past  
 all *danger of falling* from their *happiness*  
 and *glory*, in another life ; but then I take  
 it that the *great* reason why they will be  
 so, is, because they will there have the most  
 powerful motives, that can possibly influ-  
 ence rational and free agents (and such,  
 surely, they will always there continue) to  
 avoid every thing that might in the least  
 tend to endanger their happiness. And  
 the more there shall be of these motives,  
 the more secure undoubtedly their state  
 will be. And not many motives will be  
 more

more prevalent, for this purpose, than the Ser. 5. eternal sight and contemplation of those torments, which all finners, as well *angels* as *men*, are *everlastingly* doom'd to: and which, if they should become finners, they should infallibly be everlastingly doom'd to, in like manner.

So far then as the everlasting torments of the damn'd may eternally minister to the advantage and security, either of the *saints* or *angels*, in the enjoyment of their *celestial* happiness (and from what has been said, it appears to me not altogether improbable that they may, in some measure, contribute to this end) so far our reason will give us good ground to believe the *eternity* of hell-torments.

Besides, the eternal punishments of the damn'd will eternally help to make the blessed still more and more sensible of their happiness, and continue and perpetuate in their minds a due sense of it: forasmuch as in them they will eternally behold those dreadful torments, which they, through the divine assistance, have been enabled to escape: and, like shipwreck'd persons gotten safe to land, admire and rejoyce the more at their own safety, by how much  
the

Ser. 5. the more they look back upon that dreadful storm, which they so narrowly escap'd. And this will likewise everlastingly be an occasion of quickning and enlarging their praises and thanksgivings to God; inasmuch as one of the ancients speaks, they shall so much the more be sensible of their *eternal* obligations to the divine grace, by how much they shall behold those evils and torments which they, through its assistance, have happily avoided, to be *eternal*. And this also will give them *eternal* occasion to revere and adore the infinite *holiness* and *justice* of God: to rejoyce and triumph (not in the sufferings of their *fellow creatures*, in themselves consider'd) but as they are the manifestations of God's justice, and almighty power, and victory over his enemies, and consequently bring great glory and honour to him: and to detest and abhor sin more and more, for ever and ever. And in this sense some understand the words  
 Ps. 58. 10. of the *Psalmist*: *The righteous shall rejoyce when he seeth the vengeance*; tho' most certainly they are there meant, of the judgments of God upon wicked men in this life: and those of the prophet Isaiah lxvi. 24. *Their worm shall not die, neither*

Gregor.  
 lib. 4. Dial.  
 log. c. 44.



*ther shall their fire be quenck'd, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.* Ser. 5.

From all which it is plain, that the ends which God may serve, by the *eternal* torments of the damn'd, are very *great* and *noble*, very well becoming him to design and promote; and, from this consideration alone methinks, we might be strongly inclin'd to believe that it will be so, even though the gospel had not so clearly reveal'd to us, that it shall be so.

*Lastly*, It is utterly inconceivable to reason, how the damn'd shall ever get rid of the guilt of their sins, and, if not of the guilt, to be sure not of the punishment of them. The heathens indeed fancy'd that the *fire* of *hell* would have a *lustrating* or *cleansing* quality, by which it would be able, in some considerable tract of time, to make most sinners clean from their sins (I say, most sinners; for even they suppos'd that the sins of very *great* and *heinous* offenders could never, by this means, be *done away*: and that therefore their punishments must be *eternal*.) But this is plainly a gross and material conceit; for, how fit soever fire may be to purge material things (as it is thought by many, the *elements*

Ser. 5. *elements* of this world will be *cleans'd* and *purify'd* by the last *conflagration*) yet it is evident that it can have no *cleansing* quality for *souls*, *immaterial* substances, whose *dross* and *filth*, if I may so speak, lyes all in the *will*, and can be reach'd and separated thence by no other fire, but that of the *Holy Spirit*.

There are but two ways, by which sinners can in the least hope to *remove* the *guilt* of their past sins, *viz.* offering a *sufficient attonement* or *satisfaction* to the divine *justice* for them, or *repenting* of them: and both these, we have great reason to believe, the *damn'd* will be utterly *incapable* of.

As to *satisfaction*, it is plain they can offer none from among themselves, they being all condemn'd persons, and each man's utmost sufferings being but the just punishment of his own sins. And where shall they look for *satisfaction* from any other? The only person capable, either in *earth* or *heaven*, to make *satisfaction* for them, they did wilfully refuse, when he would have *satisfy'd* for them: and, having done so, they can have no reason to hope for any farther offers of this kind  
from

from him. Nay, he himself has plainly Ser. 5.  
 cut off all ground for such hopes, by telling  
 them, that there *remains now no more sa-* Heb. 10.  
*crifice for sin* : and that the *benefit* of his<sup>26.</sup>  
 satisfaction should extend to such persons 5. 9.  
 only, as should repent of their sins, before  
 their departure out of this world.

And then, for *repentance*, what *capaci-*  
*ty* can any person be in for *that* (suppo-  
 sing it would do without an atonement,  
 which yet we have great reason to believe  
 it would not) when he is under the actu-  
 al punishment of the most severe and into-  
 lerable torments, for his sins? Is such a  
 man in a condition of *willing* and *acting*  
*freely*, as repentance must be an act of  
*pure freedom* and *choice*? Are not his tor-  
 ments a constraint upon him to *repent* of  
 his sins, I mean *so far* to *repent* of them,  
 as to make him wish that he had not  
 brought himself into this *state of tor-*  
*ment*, by them? Can a man feel misery,  
 and not wish that he were out on't? But  
 what proof is this, of a thorough *refor-*  
*mation* of *heart* and *life*, of hating *vice* and  
 loving *virtue* for their own sakes, and up-  
 on account of the *acceptableness* of the  
 one, and the *odiousness* of the *other*, in  
 the

Ser. 5. the sight of God ; in which the nature of a true repentance doth chiefly consist ? How shall they give proof of their repentance, who are not in a state of *liberty*, and consequently not in a state of *tryal* and *probation* ? Or, what reasonable assurance can they give themselves, that they shall ever be put into such a state ? Have they not once been in such an one already, and most inexcusably and obstinately abus'd that ; and is not this a very good reason, why they should not expect any other ? Will not their own reason join with the scripture, in declaring to them, that, since they would not accept of salvation, when it was most lovingly and freely offer'd to them, they shall never have any farther offers of it ; that, since they did so long *abuse* and *affront* God's *patience* and *long suffering*, while it was attending upon them in this world, and endeavouring to *lead them to repentance*, they shall never, in the least, taste any more of it, in the next world ? Will not their time of *tryal*, their *day of grace*, be there at an end, and consequently their very power of repenting at an end too ? And what then must necessarily follow, but that, *as the tree is fall'n, so it must*

*must lye for ever*: that those who are *un-* Ser. 5.  
*just, must be unjust still*, and those who  
 are *filthy, be filthy still*: and, being *eter-*  
*nally* unjust and *eternally* filthy, be like-  
 wise *eternally* wretched and *eternally*  
 miserable?

These are the principal arguments;  
 which are brought from reason, in proof  
 of the *eternity* of hell-torments: and, I  
 hope, they are abundantly sufficient for  
 the end, for which I design'd them, *viz.*  
 to shew that our *reason* does very natural-  
 ly *fall in*; and *agree* with, what *revelati-*  
*on* offers, upon this head.

Let us then now sum up the whole evi-  
 dence, and see what the issue of our cause  
 will be. We have here the *eternity* of  
 hell-torments express'd, by the Holy Spirit;  
 in words as plain and proper, as could pos-  
 sibly be chosen for that purpose, and that  
 too frequently, and with great variety of  
 expression; we have almost the whole  
 christian church, in all ages, interpreting  
 these words and expressions, of a *true* and  
*proper* eternity: nay, we have the scrip-  
 ture it self determining its own sense, in  
 this point, by such circumstances, as can  
 never be reconcil'd to any other sense than



Ser. 5. that, which we have been pleading for. And all that can be said against this is, that there is a bare possibility that these words should have another sense: because they are sometimes, though very rarely, us'd in another sense in scripture, especially in the New Testament.

Add to this, that our reason highly favours this assertion of the *eternity* of hell-torments: and gives us such good arguments, why it may be: and discovers such noble uses of it, if it should be: and is so entirely at a loss to find out how, according to the order in which God has put things, it can possibly be otherwise: that from these alone, abstracted from all other considerations, it must be granted that we have, at least, *fair probabilities* that it will be.

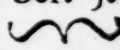
And how then can it possibly come to pass, that men, who pretend to believe the scriptures, and to be all obedience to reason, can yet continue doubtful, in so plain a case? How can any wise man answer it to himself, even supposing that there were some ground for doubting about this matter, yet not to take the safest side in this doubtful case, which most certainly ours is?

is? We, by the believing the *eternity* of Ser. 5. hell-torments, shall be the more excited and spurr'd on to care and diligence in providing for our future state, and, by this means, shall infallibly gain this advantage, that we shall the more surely avoid the torments of hell, whether they be *eternal* or *no*. Whereas they on the other side, slackning and abating the rigour of the gospel threatnings, will be too apt to slacken and abate their care and industry too, as to their salvation: and so may happen to lose their souls, out of a *niggardly fear* only, of believing *too much*.

But it will be said, is not the belief of a *long duration* of hell-torments, for a *thousand years* suppose, a sufficient motive to men, to perform the conditions of the *gospel*, that so they may avoid these torments? I answer, that I think it ought to be so to all men, and will certainly be so to every truly wise man. But this is not the question here; we are not debating what we may think sufficient, but what God has been pleas'd actually to threaten: whether, strictly and properly speaking, *everlasting* torments in hell for sinners or *no*. And how powerful a motive soever

Ser. 5. the fear of *very lasting* torments may be,  
 we are sure the fear of *everlasting* torments will be a more powerful one ; and we do not find even this so very effectual, that we should dare, without the plainest reasons for so doing, to abate and take off from the rigour of it. Besides, I cannot help suspecting, that the same *self-conceit*, or *carnal affection*, or *suggestion* of the *devil*, which makes men unwilling to believe the *eternity* of hell-torments, will soon make them as unwilling to believe their *long duration*, or indeed *any thing at all* of them. For so it is generally seen, that infidelity grows apace, and that men soon come, from doubting of any one point, especially if of great moment, to doubt of all. And indeed, according to the grounds upon which these men doubt in this case, it would not be at all strange to find them doubting in many more. Nay, so we find they actually do, and that too in cases of the highest importance, the *divinity* of our blessed Saviour, &c.

Let us then be extremely cautious, how we venture to *weaken the terrours of the Lord*, by expounding away, in great measure, the force of them : lest, by so doing

ing, we fall short our selves, and make Ser. 5.  
others do so too, of that fear and diligence,   
with which we ought *all* to *work out*  
*our salvation*. Let us seriously consider, whether this be not the sin of *diminishing* from God's book (for it is much at one to diminish from the *sense*, or from the *letter* of it) and whether, if it be so, we shall be able to endure that heavy curse, denounc'd against this sin in particular, of having our *parts taken out of* Rev. 22.  
*the book of life*. In one word, let us not, <sup>19.</sup>  
without the highest reason, ever begin to doubt of any *plainly reveal'd* point of religion, more especially if of *great* moment, lest, by so doing, we give the devil *an handle*, to make us doubt of more; and God, in just judgment for our unreasonable doubting, be provok'd to give us up to endless doubting, which is the most uneasy and unmanly state of life that can be.

Let those of us, who profess that we believe the *eternity* of hell-torments, endeavour to live, as becomes men of such a belief, with eternity always in our view, with a due dread and fear of an *eternity* of *misery*. And, if we are once duly pos-

Ser. 5. fess'd of this, it will apparently shew it self, in the whole conduct and management of our lives: in keeping us, in all manner of instances, from every thing that has the least *appearance of evil*, that may in the least indanger our falling into this sad *eternity* of wo. Oh *eternity*, *eternity*! who can bear the thoughts of being *miserable* for *ever*? Who would not do or endure any thing in this world, rather than suffer unspeakable torments, for *ever and ever*, in the *next*? To be in hell at all is certainly misery enough, but to be there *for ever*, is to be as miserable, as we *possibly can be*.

And let those among us, who pretend that they cannot believe the *eternity* of hell-torments, yet at least shew that they are sincere in these their pretensions, by living up to what they own they can believe. You see there is but small comfort for sinners, even in the softest sense that can possibly be put upon the threatnings of the gospel. A *thousand years*, *whole ages* of torments, must needs make a terrible impression upon the minds of men, who ever consider at all: and the case must, beyond all doubt, be *very bad*, when



when those who do all that they can do, Ser. 5. and a great deal more than they should do, to help it, can make it look *no better*. You, who say that you think a *very long duration* of hell-torments a sufficient motive to a good life, shew, by your own lives, that you think so. If you do this, you will both approve your selves to be honest men, and provoke us, who believe more than you, if we have any shame or sense of our duty, to an *emulation* and *victory* over you, in *goodness*: and, by this means, to prove whose belief best serves the interest of God and religion: and that we may safely take for the truest. Nay, if you do but live thus, this will be the likeliest way to bring you to the same belief with us, if we are in the right: there being no such ready way to *truth*, as a *good life*.

God, give us all grace, seriously to lay to heart what has been said, and to learn truly to *fear him*, who hath power to *destroy both body and soul in hell*, where the worm dyeth not, and the fire is not quenck'd, yea, I say unto you, to *fear him*.



## S E R M O N VI.

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The true meaning of the Eternity  
of Hell-Torments.

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MATTHEW XXV. 41.

*Then shall he say unto them on the  
left hand, depart from me, ye curs-  
ed, into everlasting fire, prepared  
for the devil and his angels.*



Am now upon the subject  
of the *eternity of hell-tor-  
ments*, and have already ad-  
vanc'd so far in it, as to  
have prov'd in *general*, both  
from *scripture* and *reason*, that the tor-  
ments of hell will be truly and properly  
*eternal*, or have a *duration* without end.

But

But because many, of those who seem Ser. 6.  
to allow the *eternity* of hell-torments in *ge-*  
*neral*, or, at least, the *authority* of those  
texts of scripture, which, we think, plainly  
assert it; do nevertheless give such parti-  
cular explications of what they mean, both  
by it and them, as do, in great measure,  
*weaken* the *force*, and consequently *lessen*  
the *influence* of them, upon the minds of  
men. I therefore think my self oblig'd, in  
*justice* to my *subject*, but *much* more in  
*justice* to *God* and *religion*, and *charity* to  
the *souls* of men, to enquire somewhat  
more distinctly into this matter; and, for  
this purpose, I have propos'd,

*Thirdly*, More particularly to explain,  
what we are to understand by the *eternity*  
of hell-torments: in order to obviate those  
false meanings, which the *Socinians* and o-  
thers give, of several of those texts of scrip-  
ture, upon which we build our belief of it.  
And, in doing this, I will endeavour,

*First*, To refute the false meanings,  
which are given of it, and the texts of  
scripture relating to it. And,

*Secondly*, To shew and establish the true  
meaning.

*First,*

Ser. 6. *First*, I am to refute the false meanings which are given of it, and the texts of scripture relating to it; and they are these which follow.

*First*, That the only *eternal* punishment of the damned shall be *annihilation*, or an utter *extinction* of their beings.

*Secondly*, That if they shall *eternally exist*; yet they shall have no other *eternal* punishment, than their loss of *God* and *heaven*, and the natural consequences of *that*, and of their *eternal existence*, but shall not moreover eternally undergo *positive* torments.

*Lastly*, That not all the damn'd shall be eternally *tormented*, but that many of them shall, in *time*, be releas'd from their torments.

*First*, That the only *eternal* punishment of the damn'd shall be *annihilation*, or an utter *extinction* of their beings. This is maintain'd by many of the *Socinians*, but with this difference, that some hold they shall be immediately annihilated, after the day of judgment; others, that they shall first suffer positive torments for a considerable time, and then at last be releas'd from *being*. *Wolfsogenius*, upon the 25th of St. *Matthew*

Matthew and the 46th verse, makes the Ser. 6.  
*everlasting punishment*, which the wicked  
 are there doom'd to, to be only their *pe-*  
*rishing for ever*; but *Crellius*, explain-  
 ing the same text, makes it import, that  
 the wicked shall be first tormented, and  
 then shall be *extinguish'd* and *destroy'd*.

Fratr. Po-  
 lon. vol. 3.  
 p. 335.

What ground they have from scripture, for  
 either of these explications, we shall see  
 by and by, when I come to examine the  
 texts which they produce for this purpose.

In the mean time, I cannot but observe  
 to you, that the texts of scripture which  
 are to be produced by the *Socinians*, to  
 prove the *annihilation* of the wicked, ought  
 to be very plain and full, because both na-  
 ture and reason presume very strongly on  
 the other side, *viz.* that *the wicked shall*  
*not be annihilated*. And tho' our notions  
 from nature and reason ought always to  
 submit to revelation, especially in such a  
 case as this, which very much depends up-  
 on the positive will of God, who can cer-  
 tainly best tell what he wills in it; yet  
 because nature and reason are, in some  
 sense, revealers of God's will, as well as  
 scripture, tho' not so perfect ones, we may  
 very justly demand from scripture a clear  
 and



Ser. 6. and full revelation of God's will, as to any point, before we depart from that, which we, by our clearest notions of nature and reason, take to be his will.

Nature plainly tells us, that the souls of wicked men are, in themselves, as *immortal* as those of the good; that they have no principles of *alteration* or *corruption* in them, any more than theirs; that they were all created alike at first, and consequently must all alike go on, in virtue of the same nature, to *immortality*. So that, without a *special interposition* of the divine providence, to put an end to their *beings*, they must naturally be *immortal*. And reason, which knows that God made nothing in vain, cannot tell how to think, that when God created the souls of all men of an immortal nature, he design'd however, that a great part of them, I fear much the greatest, should not continue, according to their nature, immortal. Especially, when she considers likewise, what wise and glorious ends God may serve by the *immortality* of the wicked, in punishing them mightily for their sins, making them duly sensible of the *power of his wrath*, and preserving them as everlasting monuments,

ments, and examples to all his creatures, Ser. 6. of his infinite *holiness, justice* and *sovereignty*. Nay, methinks it seems to be a downright contradiction to reason, to suppose that God should so far favour and befriend the wicked, as to alter the very course of nature for them, that so he may *let them out of being*; and that too just then, when their very *being*, even tho' he should not inflict any positive torments upon them, would, in great measure become a just and reasonable punishment to them for their *ingratitude* and *disobedience* to him. Nay farther, I cannot see the least ground from reason to expect, that God should be so kind to the wicked, as (even after they have suffered very great torments, for a considerable time) not to keep them to the *law* of their nature; but, by stopping the course of it, in a *preternatural* manner, to *release* them from *being*. Why should God hinder them, from reaping to the full this *naturally* everlasting *punishment* of their sins? What pretensions can they possibly have to this *extraordinary* favour from God, who, in utter contempt of all his *warnings, promises* and *threatnings*, in contradiction to the *dictates* of their

Ser. 6. their own *nature* and *reason*, and in spight of all the *strongest* obligations from *duty* and *gratitude*, *wilfully*, *habitually*, *presumptuously*, and with an *high hand*, flew in his face, trampled under foot his laws, neglected the *great salvation* offered by his *Son*, crucified and put him to an open *shame afresh*, griev'd his *Holy Spirit*; and, in one word, did all that they could do, to affront and provoke God, and cut off all manner of hope of *mercy* and *favour* from him in *another life*? Can there be any good sense in, can there be the least *shadow* of reason for, supposing, that God will over-rule and change the natural course and order of things, only to save from just punishment, such *wretches*, such *ingrates*, such *rebels*, such *traitors* as these?

Well then, let us now come on, and see whether the scriptures are so clear and full, in this point, as they ought to be, to lead us unto the belief of it, against all these strong appearances and presumptions of *nature* and *reason*. But alas! so far shall we be from finding them so, that, excepting a *word*, or an *expression* or two, which, till they come to be considered thoroughly, only look a little this way, there is not the  
least

least countenance for this *notion* in scrip- Ser. 6.  
ture ; but a great deal of plain proof to ~  
the contrary.

It is there said indeed, that God is able to *Matth. 10.*  
*destroy both body and soul in hell*; that <sup>28.</sup>  
the wicked shall be *punish'd with ever-* <sup>2 Thes. 1.</sup>  
*lasting destruction*; that their end is *de-* <sup>Phil. 3. 19.</sup>  
*struction*: and their damnation is called <sup>2 Pet. 3. 7.</sup>  
their *perdition*; and these words *destroy*,  
*destruction* and *perdition* are brought, to  
support this notion of the *annihilation* of  
the wicked. But why must these words  
be forc'd to signify *annihilation*? Are they  
not frequently us'd, in our own language,  
to signify no more than the inflicting some  
notable *mischief* or *torment*; as when we  
say a man will utterly *undo*, or utterly  
*destroy* us? Do not prophane authors, both  
*Greek* and *Latin*, commonly use them in  
this sense? Nay, are they not twice us'd  
in this very sense in the new testament it  
self; once *Luke* iv. 34. where the same  
thing seems to be meant by *destroying* the ἀπολέσαι  
*unclean spirit*, with that which is expres- βασανίσαι  
sed *Matth.* viii. 29. by *tormenting*; ano-  
ther time, *1 Cor.* v. 5. where *St. Paul*  
commands the *Corinthians*, by *virtue* of  
his *authority*, to deliver up the incestu-  
ous

Ser. 6. ous person unto *Satan*, for the destruction of the flesh; not for annihilating of the flesh, I hope, but for the *afflicting* or *tormenting* of the flesh; either by diseases, which some suppose the *devil* had then power to inflict upon persons *excommunicated* from the church, or, at least, by a very *grievous* and *mortifying* sorrow, which such *severe censures* of the church were then wont to work, in such as were *censured* by it.

Job. 3. 36. Again it is said, *that he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life*; but there it is plain, by what goeth before, *he that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life*, that by *life* is meant the *everlasting happiness* prepar'd for good christians; which tho' it is true the wicked shall never see, yet they shall see such a life, as shall make them capable of having the wrath of God to *abide on them*; as it follows in the latter part of this verse.

Farther, it is urg'd, that the *damnation* of the wicked is call'd *death* in scripture; and this sure, if any thing, must signify *annihilation*. But why so? may not *death* as well signify misery, as life is frequently us'd to signify *happiness*? Nay, doth  
not



not the Scripture itself plainly use it in Ser. 6. this sense, where it tells us, the *fearful and unbelieving, &c.* shall have their part <sup>Revel. 21.</sup> 8.

*in the lake, which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death?*

Certainly *burning with fire and brimstone*, cannot be *death*, properly speaking, or *annihilation*; but, being a punishment much greater than *death*, it is figuratively express'd under the name of *death*, which

is by most men dreaded, as one of the greatest of evils. *We*, saith *Lactantius*,

*call that punishment or pain the second death, which is as lasting as immortality it self; and which is full of the severest torments.* <sup>De vita beata, l. 7. l. 2. c. 12.</sup>

Still, some insist, that it is no where said in scripture, that the wicked shall be *immortal*; and so far they are in the right, that this is no where said in express words, unless we allow those words of St. *Paul*, 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52, 53. that *we shall all be changed, that the dead shall be rais'd incorruptible*, and that *this mortal must put on immortality*, to belong to the *wicked* as well as to the *good*, as many learned men have thought they do. But, not to dispute this at present, it is plain that all

Ser. 6. those texts, which assert that the wicked shall be the *subjects* of *everlasting* torments, do necessarily imply that they shall be *immortal*. If they must *depart into everlasting fire*; if they must *go into everlasting punishment*; if they shall be *tormented for ever and ever*; if the *smoke of their torments shall ascend up for ever and ever*: these are all very substantial proofs of their immortality, or everlasting existence.

One thing more we often hear of, which is, that several *fathers* of the church, besides *Origen* before mentioned, as *Justin Martyr*, *Irenæus*, *Theophilus*, *Antiochenus*, *Tatian*, and *Arnobius*, do very much favour this opinion, that the wicked shall be *annihilated*. To which I have time now only to answer thus much, that whatever unwary expressions any of these *fathers* may have dropt in their writings, which may seem to look this way, they generally speak as clearly and fully on the other side, of the wicked's being *eternally* to exist in torments, as we can in reason desire. *Justin Martyr* speaks of the *punishment and torment of the wicked, in everlasting fire, of their interminable torment,*

Ap. 1. p.

41, 46.

Ap. 2. p.

57. 64. 71.

87.

ment, their everlasting torment, and their Ser. 6.  
 everlasting feeling in eternal fire. Ire-  
 naeus declares over and over again, that  
 the wicked and unjust shall be sent into  
 everlasting fire, that their punishment  
 shall be eternal, and that they shall be  
 damn'd for ever. Theophilus Antioche-  
 nus mentions the everlasting punishment,  
 everlasting torment, everlasting fire of  
 the wicked. Tatian speaks expressly of  
 their immortal existing under punishment.  
 Arnobius, tho' he was but a Catechumen  
 when he wrote his book, and spoke very  
 imperfectly of several articles of the chris-  
 tian faith ; yet speaks very plainly of the  
 unextinguishable fire of hell. Nay, even  
 Origen himself, however his private judg-  
 ment might be to this point, which yet is  
 disputed among learned men, tells us, that  
 this was one of the doctrines of the church,  
 in his time, that every soul should either  
 enjoy the inheritance of eternal life, or  
 be delivered over to eternal fire, and pu-  
 nishments. All which being well confide-  
 red, we shall find but very little counte-  
 nance from the primitive fathers, for this  
 opinion of the annihilation of the wicked.

Iren. l. 1.  
 c. 2. l. 2.  
 c. 6. l. 3.  
 c. 4. l. 4.  
 c. 47.  
 Ad Autol.  
 p. 79.

Tatian.  
 Sect. 21.  
 Advers.  
 Gent. l. 2.

Proem.  
 πρὸς ἀρ-  
 χιεπ.

Ser. 6. To what has been said I might farther  
 add, that the scripture (in all those places,  
 in which it tells us, that it would have  
 been better for the wicked, *that they had*  
*never been born*, and that there shall be  
 degrees in the punishment of the wicked,  
 and that those of *some* shall be *more tole-*  
*erable*, than those of *others*) doth suffici-  
 ently intimate that *annihilation*, especially  
*immediate annihilation*, after the *day of*  
*judgment*, shall not be the *punishment* of  
 the *wicked*. For we all know, that there  
 can be no such thing, as *degrees in annihila-*  
*tion*: and that *not to be*, after we *have*  
*been*, is just the same (neither better nor  
 worse) as *not being*, before *we were born*.  
 But it is high time to quit this head, up-  
 on which I should not have insisted so long,  
 as I have, but that I am sensible that this  
 opinion, which I have been refuting, is one  
 of the main engines which the *devil* makes  
 use of to *deceive* men into *utter ruin*, one  
 of the main comforts and supports of wick-  
 ed men, in their wickedness. An evident to-  
 ken this of the great depravedness and  
 wretchedness of humane nature, that can  
 make it seek for refuge and comfort, in  
 the hope of *not being*, when it has the *glo-*  
*rious*

rious offer of everlasting life and happiness lying before it, and may be as happy for ever, as it is capable of being, if it be not its own fault. I conclude this head with the words of *Crellius*, however inconsistent with himself in other places, that *neither doth the scripture assert, nor reason prove* (I may add, *nor the primitive fathers allow*) *that God will annihilate the souls of the wicked, after the day of judgment.* And so I pass on to enquire.

Ser. 6.

Solut. Problem. tom. 4. p. 533.

Secondly, Whether, if the damn'd shall eternally exist, yet they shall have no other eternal punishment, than their loss of God and heaven, and the natural consequences of that, and of their everlasting existence: but shall not moreover eternally undergo positive torments. And here I know it is confidently said, that many of the ancient doctors of the church doubted, whether the wicked should undergo such a punishment, as should have the sense of intolerable torments join'd with it. But that they really did so, much less, that they had any ground from scripture so to do, I am by no means satisfy'd.

Wolffg. in Matt. 25. 46.

You have just now heard how *Justin Martyr*, and the foremention'd Fathers,



Ser. 6. who are generally quoted, as doubting about the *eternity* of the positive torments of the damn'd, and inclining rather to believe that they will not be eternal, have spoken as to this matter. The words, which they constantly use, to express the *everlasting punishments* of the wicked, are the properest words, that could possibly have been chosen to denote positive torments: as *κόλασις*, *τιμωρία*, *δίκη*, all words that signify chastisements, or corporal punishments, inflicted by magistrates or judges. They roundly assert *the punishment and torment of the wicked in everlasting fire*, an *unextinguishable fire*, which the wicked shall *feel everlastingly*, &c. and this sure is *everlasting positive torment*, with a *vengeance*. And this they do frequently, and in those places too, where they are purposely giving an account of the christian faith, and vindicating it against its adversaries. And what now if, after all this, they have happen'd to drop an expression or two, which may be capable of being drawn to favour the ceasing of the positive torments of the damn'd? Ought we not much rather to ascribe this to excess of good nature, unaccurateness in  
speak-

speaking some remains of their *beathen* philosophy, an over-warm zeal in opposing some pretended *Platonists*, who seem'd to assert to the soul a *self-existent* immortality : or indeed to any other cause, than such a settled perswasion and judgment about this matter, as must make them so extremely inconsistent with themselves.

But, supposing that these, or any other ancient doctors of the church, had doubted, as to this point ; yet I can see no manner of reason, or ground from scripture, for us to doubt along with them. The scriptures indeed tell us, that the wicked shall *depart* from *Christ*, that they shall *not see God*, that they shall *not enter into his rest*, that they shall *not inherit the kingdom of Christ and of God*. And these are the very good proofs that the *loss of God and heaven* shall be part of their everlasting punishment ; but, by no means, proofs that it shall be the whole of it. For, do not the same scriptures add, that they must depart *into everlasting punishment*, *κόλασιν*, a word, as one of the *Soci-* Wolfog.in  
*nians* himself tells us, which properly sig-<sup>Matt. 25.</sup>  
<sup>46.</sup>  
*nifies bodily pain or chastisement* ? Do not they say, that they shall be tormented for

Ser. 6. *ever and ever*, βασανισθήσονται, they shall be rack'd and *tortur'd*, as malefactors are? Can we make any thing else, than positive torments, of that *everlasting fire*, into which they shall be cast, and from which *the smoke* of their torments shall ascend up for ever and ever? Could we our selves have spoken in terms more full, expressive and significant, for this purpose? And, if not, what is it that we can doubt about?

Why truly, when all comes to all, the great objection is, that our reason cannot understand, how this can be; that it cannot comprehend, how the damn'd can have any such sort of body, as shall everlastingly subsist in fire, without being consum'd: or at least, that it cannot conceive, how this can be, without a *continu'd miracle*, or *series of miracles*, which some men are very unwilling to allow. But surely it is no great wonder, that *revelation* should make known such things to us, as we are not able to comprehend the manner of. It is no hard matter to believe that God can do things, which to us finite creatures seem very strange and unaccountable. But it is very natural and rational, and easy to believe, that whatever God has said, that he

he will do, in some way or other, be it Ser.6.  
with miracle or without. You have seen  
that many of the *heathens*, who yet had  
no *revelation* for this, made no difficulty  
of believing that the wicked should be *e-*  
*verlastingly tormented*, by *fire*, in *hell*.  
And they left it to their Gods to take care,  
how this was to be done, without concern-  
ing themselves about it, or boggling at  
the belief of it, because they did not under-  
stand the manner of it. A grievous re-  
proach this to many, who call themselves  
*christians*, and yet dare not trust their  
God, as far as the *heathens* themselves  
trusted theirs; who will hardly believe  
him, though he speaks never so plainly, if  
he speaks of doing things above their com-  
prehension: nor suffer him to work a *mi-*  
*racle*, even though they cannot understand,  
how his *veracity* can be salv'd, without it.  
Certainly, as long as there is no contradic-  
tion, as to the doing of any thing, which  
God has declar'd he will do: as long as such  
a thing is capable of being done, either in  
a natural or supernatural way, it highly  
becomes us, in honour to God, to believe  
firmly that it will be done.

Farther

Ser. 6. Farther it is objected, that, although it is perfectly at God's pleasure, whether he will ever admit sinners to the *enjoyment* of *himself* and *heaven*; yet it seems not to be so, whether he shall inflict *everlasting positive torments* upon the damn'd, or no. The former is matter of favour, and he may dispose of his favours, as he pleaseth: but this latter is matter of justice; and therefore here God must proceed by the laws of justice, which do not seem to allow the *infliction* of *everlasting positive torments*, for *temporary* sins. But, this being an objection, which will have its answer, in my following discourse, I shall pass it over here, and proceed,

*Thirdly* and *Lastly*, To refute that notion, that not all the damn'd shall be *eternally* tormented, but that many of them shall, in time, be releas'd from their torments.

The *heathens*, as I before hinted to you, were generally of opinion, that only the most heinous and notorious sinners should continue in hell, *for ever*: but that all others, some sooner, some later, in proportion to their respective degrees of sinfulness, should be releas'd from it. To which purpose,



purpose, *Plato* tells us, in his *Phædo*, that Ser. 6. they, who have committed great wickednesses, though such as may in time be heal'd, must fall into hell; but, when they have fall'n into it, and continu'd a year in it, they shall be cast out again, by the rivers of heat or cold: in which they suppos'd they should be tormented.

And the latter *Jews* have divided hell into two parts, the upper and lower hell: and the upper they appropriate to those, whom they call the *prevaricators of Israel*, that is, such as were sinners of a more moderate degree; and they allotted them generally *twelve months* stay there, or more, if their sins requir'd it. Thus one

of their famous Rabbies tells us: 'This punishment, saith he, which we have been speaking of, whether it belongs to the body alone, or to the soul alone, or to both body and soul, is different, and varies according to the state and condition of each person respectively. For it cannot be that they, who have done partly good and partly evil, should be tormented with those greatest torments of all, which we have before mention'd. But after a certain time, their punishment shall cease, viz.

Windet,  
Sect. 8.

Ser. 6. ‘ *viz.* when that wicked custom of sinning  
 ~~~~~ ‘ is quite done away, and utterly forgot-  
 ‘ ten, and, according to the opinion of our
 ‘ doctors of blessed memory, that will be,
 ‘ in about twelve months. Then they
 ‘ shall not only be freed from their tor-
 ‘ ments, but shall ascend to the mansions
 ‘ of the blessed, to dwell and take part
 ‘ with them, in their happiness.’

Ibid.

And, from the *heathens* and *Jews* together, the *Mahometans* have feign’d a place, between the extreme torments of *hell* and *paradise*, where some sorts of sinners should endure torment for a time, but not for ever. *Those* indeed, who both *believe* and *practise* ill, they give up to *eternal torments* : but as for those, who believ’d well, though they did lead wicked lives, they leave them to the mercy of God, to punish or pardon them, as he shall think fit; but still, with a bar to *eternal* punishment.

And indeed it is no great wonder that the people of these several religions, which have been long miserably stuff’d up with fancies and fables, should give way to such altogether groundless conceits, as these are. But that *christians*, to whom the *wrath of*
 God,

God, has been, so fully and clearly, re- Ser. 6.
veal'd from heaven, against all ungodli-
ness and unrighteousness of men: that ^{Rm. I. 18.}
they, I say, should give any countenance
and entertainment to such *pure chimerical*
distinctions, as these are, seems very sur-
prizing and unaccountable.

And yet it is well known, that too ma-
ny christians indulg'd themselves, in the be-
lief of such fictions. Even, before St. Au-
stin's time, there had been no small varie-
ty of opinions about this matter: some ha-
ving maintain'd, that the torments of all
the damn'd, even of the *devils* themselves,
should have an end, which was suppos'd to
have been the opinion of *Origen*: others,
that all the damn'd of mankind should, in
time, get rid of their torments, and leave
the *devil and his angels* only, heirs of e-
ternal torments: others again, that, if not
all men, yet at least all christians, should,
after certain periods of time, be releas'd
out of *hell*: and lastly others, that, to be
sure, christians that were *given to works of*
charity, however great sinners in other
respects, should not undergo *everlasting*
punishment. And each of these opinions
they

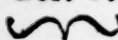
Ser. 6. they supported, by the authority of several texts of scripture.

I shall have occasion, in my following discourse, to examine those texts of scripture, which are produc'd to prove, in general, that the *torments* of the damn'd shall not be *eternal*. At present I shall only take notice of those, which are us'd particularly, in favour of damn'd *christians*, and especially such, as had been *given to works of charity* in this life. And this I think my self oblig'd to do, because it is plain that, from the very first preaching of christianity, there have always been such christians, as have plac'd a great deal too much hope, in the bare name and outward profession of a *christian*; and because our experience frequently shews us, that many christians are abundantly too apt to value themselves for their works of charity, and to act, as if they thought they might *commute those* with God, for a great many failures, neglects, and transgressions, as to *other* duties.

The texts, which are commonly brought, to prove that *christians* shall not be damn'd to *all eternity*, are these. *Whosoever believeth and is baptiz'd, shall be sav'd,*
 Mark

Mark xvi. 16. *Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life,* Joh. vi. 54. *If any man's work shall be burnt, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be sav'd; yet so, as by fire,* 1 Cor. iii. 15.

Now, as to the two first of these texts, it is plain that they can signify nothing at all, to our present purpose. For, if they signify any thing, in favour of the wicked, they signify so much, as must necessarily take away the very foundation of that point, which we are now debating. They must signify, that no wicked christian shall ever be *damn'd at all*: and then there is no room for disputing, whether wicked christians shall be damn'd to *all eternity*, or *no*. For surely *to be sav'd*, and *to have eternal life*, can never signify to be doom'd to inconceivable *torments*, for a considerable time, and then at last to be releas'd from them. But, in truth, these words do not, in the least, favour wicked christians: it being plain, from the whole tenor of scripture, that by believing, whenever the promise of *salvation* is annex'd to it, is always meant believing so effectually, as to live according to the rules of the gospel. And the same may be said of those other words,

 Ser. 6. words, *eating the flesh, and drinking the blood of the Son of God*, that by them is meant, eating and drinking these, with the necessary *qualifications of repentance, faith and charity* : otherwise, the *scripture* it self assures that, instead of *having eternal live, we eat and drink our own damnation.*

I Cor. II.
29.

And as to the other text, it can never be prov'd, that it has any relation at all to the sufferings of the damn'd in hell. But it seems to be a proverbial form of speech, design'd to represent the difficulty of that man's *salvation*, who mingles unsound doctrines, with that *great fundamental doctrine* of our religion, that *Jesus Christ is the Son of God*, or the *true Messiah* : that such a man should be sav'd indeed, because of his holding fast the *main pillar and ground of truth*, though with great *imperfection* ; but yet *so, as by fire* : with great *difficulty*, like a man furrounded with flames; but yet makes a hard shift to escape out of them. This, or whatever else, may be the meaning of this obscure text of scripture, it seems very plain that the word *σωθήσεται*, *he shall be sav'd*, cannot be us'd in any propriety of speech, of him,

him, that καὶ ἀκριβήσεται; shall be condemn- Ser. 6.
 ned or damn'd; these words being always
 oppos'd to each other in scripture, and
 the former constantly us'd to signify a
 man's *not coming into condemnation*, as it
 is express'd, *Job. v. 21.* but not his get-
 ting out of it, when he has been in it.

But, tho' there is not the least shadow
 of reason from *scripture*, to believe that
christians once doom'd to *hell-torments*,
 shall ever be *freed* from them; yet there
 is a great deal of very plain proof, for the
 contrary. For, besides that all the wicked,
 as well *christians* as *others*, are there alike
 sentenc'd to eternal torments; it is often
 there declared, that wicked *christians*
 shall find *less* favour, at the day of judg-
 ment, than any other wicked persons: that
 it will be *more tolerable* for *others*, than
 for *them*, and that it *would have been* Mat. 10.
better for them never to have known the 15.
way of righteousness, than, after they 11. 24.
have known it, to turn from the holy Mar. 6. 11.
commandment deliver'd to them. 2 Pet. 2.
 21.
 So that,
 if there were ground from scripture, to
 hope, that any of the damn'd should *ever*
 be *releas'd* from their torments; yet sure-
 ly wicked christians, instead of having the
 VOL. II. O best,

Ser. 6. best, would have the worst title to this
 ~~~~~favour, of all the whole company of the  
*damn'd* of the race of *mankind*. And this  
 sure, with the highest reason ; since their  
 sins are committed against a much clearer  
 and fuller knowledge of God's will, under  
 much greater measures of *divine grace*  
 and *assistance*, and in opposition to, and  
 contempt of, much stronger motives and  
 encouragements, much more *terrible*  
*threatnings*, and more *inviting rewards*,  
 then any others ever had.

But it may be thought perhaps, that  
 the case of those *damn'd* christians, who  
 have been *given to works of charity*, may  
 be more hopeful, than that of others. And  
 truly, were there any hope at all, in either  
 of the cases, I could easily admit that this  
 would be the more hopeful of the two.  
 For the texts of scripture, which are pro-  
 duc'd on behalf of this, are much more  
 specious than those which are produc'd  
 on behalf of the other. *Blessed are the*  
*Mat. 5. 7.*  
*6. 14. merciful, saith our Lord himself, for they*  
*shall obtain mercy : If ye forgive men their*  
*trespasses, your heavenly Father will also*  
*forgive you your trespasses : And St. James*  
*Jam. 2. 14.*  
 seems plainly to intimate, that only  
 those

those shall have judgment without mercy, Ser. 6.  
that have shewed no mercy. Nay, in our  
Saviour's own description of the day of  
judgment, we find nothing enquir'd after,  
nothing rewarded or punished, but men's  
charitableness or uncharitableness: and Mat. 25:  
the sole crime for which the rich man in  
the gospel seems to have been doom'd to  
hell, was his uncharitableness to poor  
Lazarus. And surely, from all these put  
together, we may fairly collect, that such  
wicked christians as have been given to  
works of charity, shall have a much milder  
sentence pass'd upon them, at the day  
of judgment, than any others.

Now, in answer to this, several things  
may be said, as,

*First*, That the charity of wicked christians is not true christian charity, doth not flow from those principles of an hearty love to God and our blessed Saviour, a regard to their examples and commands, and an earnest desire to please them, and become like to them, which are absolutely necessary to make our charity truly christian; and consequently that theirs is not the charity, to which the promises of the fore-mentioned texts belong. Or,

O 2

*Secondly*,

Ser. 6. *Secondly*, That these texts, if they do  
~ relate to the charity of wicked christians, such as it is, will rather prove, that they shall not be damn'd at all, than that being once damn'd, they shall ever be releas'd from their damnation. But this is not pretended to ; nor indeed, if it were, could it be of any force against the whole tenor of scripture, which so plainly assures us, that no particular grace or virtue, nothing less than universal holiness, shall save us from hell ; and against so many places of it, which threaten eternal damnation upon all such as are guilty of any wilful habits of this or that particular sin ; however, in some other respects, of innocent or even commendable behaviour. Or,

*Lastly*, That whatever favour God may be pleas'd to shew to damn'd christians, upon account of their charity, it will be in the intenseness, and not the duration, of their torments ; by mitigating that, but not this. For it is certain, that the scripture never takes the least notice of any distinction that shall be made, as to the duration of the torments of the damn'd ; but on the contrary, expressly tells us, that, at the day of judgment, the whole company



pany of the wicked, all that are plac'd on Ser. 6. our Saviour's left hand, shall alike be sentenc'd to *everlasting fire*, alike go away into *everlasting punishment*. But it does sufficiently intimate and prove to us, that there shall be distinctions made, as to the intenseness of the torments of the damn'd, telling us, that it shall be more tolerable for some than others; nay, and that the distinctions shall be so great, that some shall have a portion double to that of others; and that all shall have *torment* and *sorrow*, in proportion to their having *glorified themselves and liv'd deliciously*, be it more or less. Rev. 18. 6.

And this consideration, of the difference of the intenseness of the torments of the damn'd, is a plain answer to that objection, which is frequently made against the torments of all the damn'd being eternal, that if they shall be eternal, they will be all equal. Equal indeed they will be, as to their duration, but vastly unequal, as much as the strictest justice can possibly require, as to their intenseness.

And thus, I hope, I have refuted those false meanings, which *Socinians* and others give us, of the *eternity* of hell-torments,

*W* Ser. 6. and of several of those texts of scripture, upon which we build our belief of it. From what I have had occasion to say for this purpose, I think it will be no hard matter,

*Secondly*, To shew and establish the true meaning. And that, in short, I take to be this, *viz.* that all the wicked shall everlastingly exist in hell, and there, besides their everlasting loss of *God* and *heaven*, and the everlasting grief, anguish and torment, naturally consequent upon that and their everlasting existence, everlastingly undergo the positive torments of *hell-fire*, and of all other inflictions which the divine vengeance shall think fit to lay upon them. As, to give you a short proof of all this out of scripture.

*Act. 24. 15.* There shall be a *resurrection both of the just, and the unjust; they that have done evil shall come forth to the*  
*Joh. 5. 29.* *resurrection of condemnation, of eternal*  
*Heb. 6. 2.* *condemnation: Which condemnation shall be, not only their departing from Christ,*  
*Mat. 25.* *their not entering into God's rest, but their*  
*41, 46.* *going into everlasting punishment, into everlasting fire, where they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever; where*

where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quench'd; where is the blackness of darkness for ever; where the devil and his angels are held in everlasting chains; where those that are filthy, must be filthy still; where the wrath of God abideth on them; where they shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture, into the cup of his indignation; where they shall be tormented with fire and brimstone; and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night.

Ser. 6.

Heb. 3. 18.

19.

Rev. 14. 11.

20. 10.

Mar. 9. 44.

Jud. 14. 6.

Rev. 22. 11.

14. 10, 11.

Thus terrible an eternity of woe is there reserv'd for the wicked in another life. And, to add more to the terribleness of this woe; its very eternity is a plain proof that it shall be, without the least intermission or relaxation. For it is not the nature of eternal things to rest for a while, or abate; but they keep constantly going on, without ceasing or diminishing, with the same equal vigour and intenseness for ever and ever.

Some good natur'd christians, I know, have fancied that there shall be some times of rest and refreshment for the damn'd.

O 4

But

**Ser. 6.** But alas ! what signify fancies against the natures of things themselves, and against plain texts of scripture, shewing us to the contrary, that the *damn'd* shall not have the favour so much as of one *drop of water* to cool their *tongues*, shall not have the least *rest*, the least *cessation* or *relaxation* of their *torments* day or night, for ever and ever.

As therefore we love our selves, our souls and bodies, let us not support our selves in a course of sinning, with the pitiful and false hopes of *not being*, or being *miserable* only for a time, or to this or that degree. But let us seriously set ourselves to *bring forth fruits meet for repentance*, and, by so doing, to render our selves acceptable in his sight, who has the *keys* of hell, and who alone can *save* us from *falling into it*. For let us be assured, that when we are *once in it*, we may seek for *death*, but *shall not find it* ; we may *desire to die*, but *death shall flee from us* : we shall then be *separated unto evil*, and *the Lord will not spare*, but *his anger and his jealousy will smoke against us*, and *all the curses written in his book will lie upon us*.

Rev. I. 18.  
9. 6.

Deut. 29.  
21, 22.

S E R-



## S E R M O N VII.

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The Objections against the Eternity of Hell-Torments, answered.

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MATTHEW XXV. 41.

*Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.*



H E R E remains yet one thing to be done, in relation to the subject which I am now upon, *viz.* the *eternity of hell-torments*; and that is, to answer the most material objections against it. And they, I think, are these three.

*First,*



Ser. 7. *First*, That there are several texts of *scripture*, which prove that God will not lay *everlasting punishments*, or *torments* upon *sinners*.

*Secondly*, That it is cruel and unjust, to punish temporary sins with *eternal torments*, and therefore we may be sure that God will not do it.

*Lastly*, That, though it should be allow'd that God has plainly threatened *eternal punishments*; yet he is not oblig'd rigorously to make good his threatnings, but may mitigate, or recede from them, as far as he pleaseth: and that, therefore, we cannot certainly infer from them, that sinners shall be eternally punish'd.

*First*, That there are several texts of *scripture*, which prove that God will not lay *everlasting punishments*, or *torments*, upon *sinners*. This was pretended as long ago, as before St. *Jerom's* time, who, in his comments upon the last chapter of *Isaiah*, gives us an account of some of the texts, that had been produc'd, for this purpose. And, that this should have been pretended, is no great wonder: especially in those early times of christianity, when men's respect for the *holy scriptures* was  
so

so great, that it was in vain to offer to set Ser. 7. up any new opinions, without, some appearance at least of, countenance from, scripture. But that there should really be any good ground from thence, to believe that the *torments* of the *damned* shall *not be eternal*, notwithstanding those many plain texts of scripture, which so expressly assert that they shall, is utterly strange and inconceivable.

However, let us look a little upon these texts of scripture, which are pretended to prove this point; and then we shall soon be able to judge, whether they really do so or no. Now, the texts which are commonly urg'd for this end, are these which follow. *My spirit shall not always strive with man*, Genes. vi. 3. *Will the Lord cast off for ever, and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clear gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?* Ps. lxxix. 7, 8, 9. *The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger for ever,* Ps. ciii. 8, 9. *Hot coals shall fall upon*

204 *The Objections, against the Eternity*

Ser. 7. *upon them, thou shalt cast them into the fire: they shall not subsist in their miseries.* Ps. cxl. 10. According to the translation of the vulgar *Latin.* *O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turn'd away, and thou comfortest me.* Isaiah xii. 1. *And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days they shall be visited.* Isai. xxiv. 22. *For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.* Isai. lvii. 16. *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinn'd against him, until he plead my cause and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness.* *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity; and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.* Micah vii. 9, 18. *These shall receive a long judgment, or damnation.* Mark xii. 40. According to the translation of the vulgar *Latin.* *God hath*  
con-

concluded them all in unbelief, that he Ser. 7.  
might have mercy upon all. Rom. xi. 32. ~~~~~  
And death and hell were cast into the lake  
of fire. This is the second death. Rev. xx.  
14.

Now, not to enter upon a particular  
discussion of every one of these texts,  
which would run out into much too great  
a length, for my present discourse: I shall  
content my self, with making a general ob-  
servation or two upon them. As,

*First*, That it cannot be prov'd that any  
one of the texts, alledg'd out of the Old  
Testament, has any manner of relation to  
the subject which we are now upon, *viz.*  
*hell-torments*. One of them, that seems  
to bid fairest for this, Ps. cxl. 10. *Hot  
coals shall fall upon them, thou shalt cast  
them into the fire: they shall not subsist  
in their miseries*, is plainly a mis-translati-  
on of the original words, which ought to  
have been translated thus, *Hot coals shall  
fall upon them, or let hot coals fall upon  
them, he shall, or let him, cast them into  
the fire: into deep pits, that they may  
not rise up again*. And thus restor'd to  
their true translation, if they did at all re-  
late to *hell-torments*, they would rather  
prove

## 206 *The Objections, against the Eternity*

Ser. 7. prove the eternity of them, than the contrary: for not to rise up again, out of the fire, out of the deep pits, must certainly signify everlastingly to continue in them.

v. Pol. in loc. And accordingly some expositors do make these words to be a *prediction* or *imprecation* of the *fire of hell*, that *everlasting fire*, out of which none shall ever rise up, upon the *Psalmist's* enemies. But this seems to be too harsh a sense; and besides is not generally approv'd of by commentators, who take these words to be only a *denunciation* or *imprecation* of some very severe *temporal judgment* in this life (such as was that of *raining fire and brimstone* upon *Sodom and Gomorrah*, to which many suppose the *Psalmist* here refers) but not to relate to the judgment of the other.

In like manner, all the rest of the texts, when we come to compare them with their contexts, will be found to belong more naturally a great deal to the judgments of God against sinners in this life, than to their torments in the next; and are commonly adjudged to do so by expositors. As to instance in one for all; and that seemingly the likeliest of any to relate to the future punishments of the wicked. *I will*



will not contend for ever, neither will Ser. 7.  
 I be always wroth, for the spirit should  
 fail before me, and the souls which I  
 have made. Isai. lvii. 16. This consider-  
 ed, as it stands by it self, looks plausibly  
 enough against the *eternity of hell-tor-  
 ments*; but then considered, as it stands  
 in the middle of a prophecy relating to  
 the temporal restitution of the *Jewish*  
 church and nation, as is plain from the  
 13th verse just before, where mention is  
 made of *possessing the land*, and *inheriting*  
*God's holy mountain*, it must, in all rea-  
 son, be understood of God's removing his  
 temporal judgments from his people, that  
 so they might not be quite wearied out,  
 and perish under them. And in this sense,  
 much the greatest part of commentators  
 understand them. v. Pol. in  
loc.

But it will be said, if this be so, to what  
 purpose did the opposers of the *eternity*  
*of hell-torments* produce these texts?  
 Could they hope to support their cause, by  
 texts so apparently nothing relating to it?  
 I answer, that in the primitive times of  
 christianity, they probably enough might  
 have had some hope of this; because no-  
 thing was more common then, and that  
 too

208 *The Objections against the Eternity.*

*Ser. 7.* too amongst the learnedest of the first christians, than to apply, and admit of texts of scripture, in any sense, that, upon a general view, they seem'd capable of; without nicely enquiring into the circumstances of the context, which were the most likely means to lead them to a true understanding of those texts. And accordingly, we frequently find texts applied to subjects which they have no manner of relation to; and, which is the greatest unhappiness of all, very great stress sometimes laid upon these misapplied texts, and that too in relation to subjects of the highest importance. But,

*Secondly,* I observe that these texts out of the Old Testament, of which it is at least doubtful, very doubtful, whether they relate at all to hell-torments or no, are set in opposition to texts of the other side, out of the New, which, beyond all doubt, do relate to them. Texts taken out of places, purposely treating of them, particularly describing them: texts expressing our Saviour's own words concerning them, and containing in them the very words of that sentence, by which the wicked shall be  
*doom'd*

doom'd to everlasting fire, and the cer- Ser. 7.  
tain execution of that sentence. ~~~~~

*Lastiy*, As to the texts produced of the New Testament against the *eternity* of hell-torments, I observe that the first of them, *These shall receive a longer damnation*, Mark xii. 40. is falsly rendred by the *vulgar Latin*, and should be translated, *these shall receive a greater, or more abundant damnation*, περισσότερον κρίμα, which are the original words. And thus translated, they are evidently nothing to the purpose of the *eternity* of hell-torments. I having before shew'd you, that the difference that shall be in these, shall be, not in their duration, but intenseness.

The next text, *Rom. xi. 31. God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all*, plainly relates to the mercy of God in bringing both *Jews* and *Gentiles* to the belief of the gospel, as appears from the context; and therefore signifieth nothing, as to the torments of the *damn'd*.

As little to the purpose is the last text, *Rev. xx. 14. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death*. For by *hell* there we are to

210 *The Objections, against the Eternity*

Ser. 7. understand the state of separate souls, as it is well known the original word *Αδης* signifies ; which separate state shall be no more (after the day of judgment, of which the apostle was there speaking, when all souls shall be reunited to their proper *bodies*) but shall be swallowed up together with *death*, in the *lake of fire and brimstone*. And thus the best commentators understand these words. But to suppose that by *Hades* here we are to understand *hell*, as it signifieth the *place* and *state* of the *damn'd*, would be to make nonsense of the apostles words. For, at this rate, they must mean that hell should be cast into a part of itself, as the lake of fire is acknowledged to be. Besides that, by giving up hell to this second death, Mr. *Hobbes*, who urgeth these words as an argument against the *eternity* of hell-torments, would not have his end ; since, as I have prov'd in my former discourse, this phrase *second death*, signifies a *state* of torments, and that too as lasting as immortality it self. So that he would only throw away one hell, which he is so willing to have lost, into another hell, which he would be just as unwilling to find ; and what would

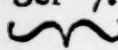
App. ad  
Leviath.  
P. 335.

would he get by that? Tho' indeed, if he Ser. 7.  
will throw away hell, immediately upon  
or after the day of judgment, as he must  
do, if he throws it away by virtue of this  
text, he cannot do fairer, than to throw  
it away into another hell, just as bad as  
itself, that so God's enemies may not e-  
scape his vengeance, just then, when one  
would expect it should begin to take ever-  
lasting hold of them.

Upon the whole, We have not so much  
as one text out of the New Testament,  
where one might most reasonably hope to  
find evidence, as to any thing belonging  
to our future state, which doth in the least  
tend to invalidate our belief of the *eternity*  
of hell-torments. And those which are  
brought out of the Old Testament for this  
purpose, are either mis-translated, or mis-  
applied, or even contrary to the very pur-  
pose, which they are brought for. Where-  
as, on the other side, the texts, which are  
alleg'd in proof of the *eternity* of hell-  
torments, are almost all taken out of the  
New Testament, are plainly to the purpose,  
and do as fully and expressly assert what  
they are brought for, as can be desir'd. So  
that, I think, there cannot possibly be



212 *The Objections, against the Eternity*

Ser 7. need of any farther arguing about this case,  but we may safely leave men to judge, from what has been already said, on which side the truth lies. I shall therefore proceed to answer what is objected.

*Secondly*, That it is cruel and unjust to punish temporary sins with *eternal* torments; and therefore we may be sure that God will not do it. So saith *Wolffogenius* upon the 25th of St. *Matthew* and the 46th verse. *Those, the wicked, shall go into everlasting punishment; as God is most exactly just in all his doings, so here we may be sure he will not inflict upon any sinner a punishment greater than his deserts: but there can be no sins so heinous, as to be equal to eternal torments.* And indeed, allowing the premises to be true, the conclusion is certain. God cannot do a cruel or unjust thing; therefore, if to punish sinners with *eternal* torments be cruel and unjust, undoubtedly God will not do it. I say *torments*, and by those I mean *positive* torments inflicted by God, such as that of *hell-fire*, &c. not such as are the natural consequences of our loss of God and heaven, and of our own acquired *evil habit of mind*, and our *eternal existence under*

*der these.* For a great many men make Ser. 7.  
a wide difference as to these two; and tho' they readily allow, that it is not to be expected that God should alter the natural course of things, as he must do, to prevent the latter; yet they can by no means allow it to be consistent with his goodness and justice to inflict the former.

I have already said several things, in a former discourse, wherein I considered the arguments drawn from reason, for proof of the *eternity* of hell-torments, which, I think, may bid fair for an answer to this objection. As,

*First,* That it is not look'd upon to be cruel and unjust amongst men, to inflict the most lasting punishments, which they are able, upon some great and notorious offenders. It is thought necessary, for the support of human governments, that the *supreme power* in them should have a right over the whole duration of men's lives, which is all of their beings, that their government can extend to; that so it may, as occasion requires, not only for habitual offences, but for single acts of very heinous crimes, inflict perpetual banishment or imprisonment, nay or even perpetual *positive*

Ser. 7. *five* torments, perpetual labouring in the mines, at the galleys, or the like. And can we possibly then be so foolish, as to think, that God has not as much right to inflict such punishments upon those that offend him, as are plainly necessary for keeping up his authority, and his government of the world, as we men have to maintain our authority and government over one another? And does not every day's experience convince us, that a right of inflicting *eternal* punishments is absolutely necessary for this purpose? Less than this, we are sure, would not do; because even this it self will not do with the greatest part of mankind. So that, if it were possible, something more, rather than less, than *eternal* torments, ought still to be threaten'd.

If it be said, that men are consenting to that power, which human governments exercise over the whole duration of their lives; and that therefore they can have no wrong done them, by the exercise of it upon them; but that they are not so consenting to God's right of inflicting *eternal* torments upon sinners. I answer, that God has no need of their consent in this point;

point; for his *creation* must have given Ser. 7.  
him an absolute right to all such power  
over his *creatures*, as is necessary to make  
them his faithful worshippers and servants,  
as I have before shewed this of inflicting  
*eternal* torments to be.

And, whereas some men will be apt to  
say farther, that it doth indeed seem neces-  
sary, that God should threaten sinners with  
*eternal* torments, but that it does not seem  
necessary that God should have a right  
actually to inflict these. I answer, that it  
is too mean and unworthy a thing to be  
suppos'd of God, that he should threaten  
any thing which he has not a right to in-  
flict; and moreover, that this bare suppo-  
sition that God has not a right to inflict  
what he threatens, must necessarily hinder  
the force and efficacy of his threatnings.

*Secondly*, That the demerits of a sinful  
life are so, beyond all conception, great;  
that it is impossible that any punishment  
can be too great for it. To live for a long  
while in an *habitual neglect* and *contempt*  
of the *sovereign Lord, Creator* and *Go-*  
*vernor* of the world; to spend a whole  
life, or great part of it, in *defying* Infinite  
*Power*, in *disparaging* Infinite *Wisdom*,

## 216 *The Objections, against the Eternity*

Ser. 7. in *despising* Infinite Goodness, in *hating* Infinite Perfection; to have no *gratitude* for the *greatest* of *Benefactors*, no *duty* for the most *rightful* of *Governors*, no *honour* for the most *glorious* of *Potentates*, no *awe* for the most *tremendous* of *Majesties*; in one word, to be continually affronting and provoking every person of the *blessed Trinity*; to *despise* the *riches* of *God's goodness*, in *sending his Son* into the world to seek and to save us, instead of letting it lead us to *repentance*; to *trample under foot* the *Son of God*, and to *count his blood* of the *covenant*, *wherewith we are sanctified*, an *unholy thing*; to *do despite* unto the *Spirit of grace*, and to turn a *deaf ear* towards him, and to *grieve him*, when he *stands at the door* and *knocketh*: to say all at once, to *refuse eternal happiness*, to *fly* from *every thing* that is *good*, and to *choose* and *pursue* every thing that is *evil*; what is all this put together, but such a prodigious mass of sin and folly, such an intolerable complication of every thing that is most offensive and provoking to God, as no punishment can be too great, no torments endure too long for?

*Lastly,*



*Lastly*, That sinners do, purely through Ser. 7.  
their own fault, and in direct opposition to  
many gracious means us'd by God to pre-  
vent this, render themselves proper objects  
of God's everlasting wrath, by wilfully con-  
tracting such sinful habits, in this life, as,  
they were plainly forewarn'd, would bring  
them under a necessity of continuing ever-  
lasting sinners, in the next life. And if,  
notwithstanding all these merciful warnings  
and endeavours of the divine goodness to  
the contrary, they would still obstinately  
go on in their sins, and at last dye in them,  
and by so doing, wilfully subject them-  
selves to this necessity, of continuing ever-  
lastingly unjust and everlastingly filthy, and  
consequently proper objects of God's ever-  
lasting wrath; can they have any reason to  
complain of God, for inflicting his ever-  
lasting wrath and vengeance upon them,  
who have thus wilfully made themselves  
the proper objects of it?

I shall only add two considerations more,  
which alone, I think, might be sufficient to  
conclude us, upon this head.

*First*, That since God has so plainly re-  
veal'd that the torments of the damn'd shall  
be eternal, this is a much clearer and stron-  
ger

## 218 *The Objections, against the Eternity*

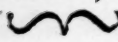
**Ser. 7.** ger argument, that it is not cruel and unjust in God to make them so ; than it is, on the other side, that he has not reveal'd that they shall be eternal: because it seems to us to be cruel and unjust in God, so to make them. We are much better judges of what God has plainly reveal'd, than we are of what is just and fit for him to do, in punishing his creatures: and there, methinks, we ought, in all modesty, to turn that objection, which is now before us, into an answer to it self. God, say some men, *cannot justly punish temporary sins, with eternal torments ; therefore we are sure that he has not reveal'd that he will do so.* God, say we on the other side, *has plainly reveal'd that he will punish sinners with eternal torments ; therefore we are sure that it cannot be unjust in him so to do.* This I take to be much the surest side of the argument, because the ground, which we proceed upon in this, is much surer, than that, upon which we proceed in the other. We cannot easily be mistaken, in judging whether a *revelation* be plain or no: but we may very easily be mistaken, in judging what is just or unjust,

just, fit or unfit, for God to do, in relation to his creatures. Ser. 7.

*Secondly*, That, taking eternal misery and eternal happiness, as they are joyn'd together in the New Testament, I cannot but think, that, if God had left it perfectly to our own choice, whether we would accept of them or no, thus joyn'd, we should have accepted of them : and if so, we can have no reason to call that cruel and unjust in God, which, if we had had full power of choosing or refusing, we should rather have chosen, than refus'd. *Eternal misery*, perhaps you'll say, is a most terrible thing, to run any, the least, hazard of ; but is not *eternal happiness* as *desirable*, on the other side, as that is *terrible*? And, if so, what reason can there possibly be, for *refusing* an *eternity* of *happiness*, which we may make sure of, if we please, for fear of an *eternity* of *misery*, which we may as surely avoid, if we please? I make no doubt but men would have lik'd the happiness, without the hazard of the misery, much better : but, since that could not be had, both together seem to me much more eligible, than no happiness at all.

And

220 *The Objections, against the Eternity*

Ser. 7. And thus much may serve to prove,  that it is not cruel and unjust in God, to inflict eternal torments upon sinners. I proceed to the

*Last objection, viz.* That, though it should be allow'd that God has plainly threaten'd eternal punishment, yet he is not oblig'd rigorously to make good his threatnings, but may mitigate or recede from them, as far as he pleaseth: and that therefore we cannot certainly infer from them, that *sinners* shall be *eternally* punish'd. So saith Mr. *Hobbes*, ' We cannot  
' prove, from the justice of God, which  
' has threaten'd eternal torments upon sin-  
' ners, that their torments will really be  
' eternal. For although he is unjust, who  
' doth not perform the good, which he  
' owes to any one; nevertheless he, who  
' doth not execute the evils or harms,  
' which he has threaten'd, is not unjust,  
' but merciful. How much less shall God,  
' who is infinitely merciful, be accounted  
' unjust, for mitigating either the lasting-  
' ness or intenseness of our deserv'd pu-  
' nishments?

Append.  
ad Leviat.  
p 335.

And, long before Mr. *Hobbes*, *Euno-*  
*mius* and his followers had us'd to talk  
much

much at the same rate, or rather worse; Ser. 7.  
*viz. that the torments of hell would not*  
*really be, but were only threaten'd, to*  
*make men afraid.* And accordingly we  
 frequently find St. Chrysostom inveighing  
 against some, in his time, who were wont  
 to say, that God's threatnings of eternal  
 torments, were only vain words, which  
 should never be accomplish'd; that God is  
 gracious and merciful, and that none of  
 these things will come to pass; but that  
 God only threatens them, to make us hum-  
 ble and good.

Zonar. ad  
 Can. 1.  
 Conc.  
 Constant.  
 p. 68.

Chrysost.  
 Homil. 8.  
 in 1 Thef.

Hom. 25.  
 31. in  
 Epist. ad  
 Rom.

So that this objection, you see, has been  
 of a very long standing; has often been in  
 the mouths of men, and probably much  
 oftner in their hearts: and moreover, it  
 has been carry'd so far as to make, not  
 only the *eternity* of hell-torments, but  
 even *hell* it self, of little, or no force.

It is high time therefore to take this ob-  
 jection to task: and that too so much the  
 rather, because we find how ready men  
 are to infer, that, if God may thus recede  
 from these threatnings, he certainly will  
 do so. Let him not be ty'd up from this,  
 by his veracity, unchangeableness and jus-  
 tice, and they will presently believe and  
 hope,



222 *The Objections, against the Eternity*

Ser. 7. hope, that his mercy will do all, that it  
may do.

But what a strange and unreasonable way of arguing is this, both as to the premises and the conclusion? It is far from being plain that God has left himself at liberty, to recede from his threatnings, in this case; and much farther, that, if he has, he will think fit to use this liberty in favour of sinners.

That God is not oblig'd to make good all his threatnings, I readily grant: because the scripture it self assures us, that his threatnings of temporal judgments are very often conditional; and consequently, if the condition, upon which they are suspended, intervenes, he ought not to proceed to execution. Nay, I will not say that in all other cases, except these in which God himself has told us there is a condition suppos'd, God is oblig'd rigorously to execute his threatnings. But then, on the other hand, it is acknowledged by all, that some of God's threatnings are *absolute* and *immutable*. Such are all those, which he has confirm'd by an *oath*, which the apostle to the *Hebrews* tells us, is an *immutable thing, in which*  
it

it is impossible for God to lie. And accord- Ser. 7.  
ingly divines are generally agreed, that the  
wicked shall *never enter into the kingdom*  
*of heaven*, because God has sworn, that  
*they shall never enter into his rest*; not  
only that *earthly* rest, which he had pro-  
vided for his people in the land of *Canaan*,  
but into that *heavenly* rest, which *remain-*  
*eth for the people of God*, of which the  
*rest* in the land of *Canaan* was but a *type*  
and *shadow*.

The great thing therefore which we are  
to enquire after is, of which of these two  
sorts the *threatnings of eternal-torments*  
are, whether *absolute* or *conditional*. And  
truly to me it seems very plain that God  
design'd them to be *absolute*. For, tho'  
it doth not appear that he has any where  
confirm'd them by an oath; yet it appears  
that he has done so much for their confir-  
mation, as is at least equal to an oath; and  
therefore ought in all reason, to be sup-  
pos'd to render them as immutable, as an  
oath it self would have done. He has  
sent his *only begotten Son* into the world,  
to be the *revealer* of this his *wrath*, a-  
gainst all *ungodliness and unrighteousness*  
of men. He made him the *preacher* of a  
fire

## 224 *The Objections, against the Eternity*

Ser. 7. *fire for the wicked, that never shall be quench'd.* He made him *himself*, whom he hath appointed to be our judge, to describe the day of judgment, and to give us an account beforehand of the very sentence, which shall then be pronounc'd upon the wicked, commanding them to *depart into everlasting fire*; and of the *immediate execution* that shall follow this sentence. *They shall go away into everlasting punishment.* And could the oath of God it self, have given a *more solemn confirmation* to his threatnings, than all this has done? Can we think that God sent his son, only to speak big, but vain words? That our Judge himself *frighten'd* us with a *sentence*, that shall *never be executed*? Nay, and that he *foretold* the *certain execution* of it, which yet, we ourselves shall find, shall *never come to pass*? Certainly it was not in the power of God himself to have given a *more sacred ratification* to his threatnings, than he has this way done. His *Son* himself has been the Mediator of the covenant between him and mankind, he has *seal'd the truth* of his threatnings, as well as of his *promises*, with *his blood*; and who then shall dare to say they are not

not

not absolute? O! how did that holy father Ser. 7.  
 St. *Chrysostom*, break out into the utmost  
 anger and indignation, against those of his  
 time, who question'd the certain accom-  
 plishment of these our Saviour's threat-  
 nings? 'And are these then only words,  
 'faith he? Is not the rich man, that de-  
 'spis'd *Lazarus* really punish'd? Are  
 'not the foolish virgins rejected by the  
 'bridegroom? Do not they, who regard-  
 'ed not our Saviour, depart into the fire  
 'prepar'd for the devil and his angels?  
 'Shall not he, that had not on a wedding  
 'garment, be bound hand and foot, and  
 'cast out into utter darkness? Is not he,  
 'who demanded the hundred pence of his  
 'fellow servant, deliver'd to the tormen-  
 'tors? Is not that true, which was said  
 'concerning the harlots, that their worm  
 'shall not dye, and their fire shall never  
 'be quench'd? Are these only threatnings?  
 'So you say indeed; but how dare you  
 'to say so, in a matter of this vast mo-  
 'ment? how dare you, of your own head,  
 'to determine these things thus? Since I  
 'my self am able, as well from what  
 'Christ said, as what he did, to manifest  
 'the quite contrary.'

Homil. 25.  
 in Epist.  
 ad Rom.

## 226 *The Objections, against the Eternity*

Ser. 7. Let us not then deceive ourselves any longer with that general shelter from threatnings, that these do not pass over a right, like promises, and therefore may be receded from. For, how true soever this may be in the general, it will do us no manner of service in this particular case before us. Here *God* and his *Son* have in so solemn a manner engag'd themselves for the actual execution of their threatnings, that sure, if ever any threatnings were absolute, these must be so. *However* therefore *God* may defer the execution of temporal evils, his truth and veracity is concern'd to inflict eternal punishments, upon impenitent sinners.

Archbp.  
Tillotson,  
Serm. of  
the truth  
of God,  
p. 361.

But, supposing that there were a condition reserv'd in these threatnings; yet what can this condition be, but such an one, as sinners shall never be able to perform? and consequently this will be just the same, as if there were no condition reserv'd at all. I have shew'd you, in a former discourse, that we cannot conceive any other conditions, upon which the damn'd can hope ever to get rid of the guilt of their sins, and to be reconcil'd to God, than *satisfaction* or *repentance*, and that both these the damn'd



damn'd are incapable of. And what then Ser. 7.  
*necessarily follows*, as Bishop *Stillington*  
 expresseth it, but that, *where the only con-* Orig. Sac.  
p. 131.  
*ditions imply'd in these threatnings are*  
*wanting, these hypothetical communica-*  
*tions become absolute predictions of what*  
*shall certainly come to pass, on all those*  
*who are destitute of the conditions sup-*  
*pos'd in them?*

Nay, and, since we are supposing, let  
 us suppose, even the very utmost, that  
 these men can desire; that God is perfectly  
 free to recede from these threatnings, with-  
 out any condition, just as himself pleases.  
 Yet what shadow of reason can sinners  
 have to hope, that God will ever thus re-  
 cede, for their sakes? I know, their  
 great hope is in his mercy. But is not  
 God's mercy always directed by his wis-  
 dom, and agreeable to his holiness, justice  
 and honour? And will not these always  
 plead more strongly, for the punishing of  
 sinners, than the other for not punishing,  
 or releasing them from punishment? Is not  
 God always the *same unchangeable God*?  
 And is not his *unchangeableness* matter  
 of great terror to wicked men? 'Let  
 ' but the sinner consider, as Archbishop

## 228 *The Objections, against the Eternity*

Ser. 7. *Tillotson* admirably expresseth it, what  
 Ser. of God is, and the consideration of his un-  
 the un- changeable nature must needs terrify him.  
 changea-  
 bleness of  
 God, p. *He is a holy God, and of purer eyes*  
 112. *than to behold iniquity. Hab. i. 12. He*  
*is not a God that hath pleasure in wick-*  
*edness, neither shall evil dwell with*  
*him; the foolish shall not stand in his*  
*sight, he hateth all the workers of ini-*  
*quity. Psal. v. 4, 5. He is likewise a*  
*just God, and will by no means clear the*  
*guilty, nor let sin go unpunish'd. Exod.*  
*xxxiv. 7. He is also omnipotent, and a-*  
*ble to execute the vengeance threatned*  
*against sinners. Who knoweth the power*  
*of thine anger? Ps. xc. 11. Thou, even*  
*thou, art to be fear'd, and who may stand*  
*in thy sight, when thou art angry. Psal.*  
*lxxvi. 7. Strong is the Lord God who*  
*judgeth. Revel. xviii. 8. And which*  
*gives a sad accent to all this, he that is*  
*thus holy, and just, and powerful, conti-*  
*nues for ever the same, and will never*  
*alter or put off any of these properties;*  
*will never cease to hate iniquity, and to*  
*be an implacable enemy to all impeni-*  
*tent sinners. And is it not a fearful*  
*thing to fa'l into the hands of this ho-*  
 ly

‘ly and just and omnipotent God, who Ser. 7.  
 ‘lives for ever, and can punish for ever? ~~~~~  
 ‘Let all obstinate sinners hear this and  
 ‘tremble; you cannot be more obstinately  
 ‘bent to continue in your wicked ways,  
 ‘than God is peremptorily resolv’d to  
 ‘make you miserable. If you be determin’d  
 ‘upon a sinful course, God is also deter-  
 ‘mined how he will deal with you, that  
 ‘he will not spare, but that his anger and  
 ‘jealousie shall smoke against you, and  
 ‘that all the curses that are written in  
 ‘his book shall light upon you, and that he  
 ‘will blot out your name from under hea-  
 ‘ven.’

In vain then do sinners comfort them-  
 selves with the hope of God’s not being  
 oblig’d rigorously to make good his threat-  
 nings of *eternal* torments. It seems most  
 probable, that he has oblig’d himself to do  
 this. Or, if he has not, but has reserv’d  
 to himself some conditions, which if the  
 damn’d shall ever be able to perform, they  
 may then hope for his mercy, and release  
 from their torments: yet we are utterly at  
 a loss to find out any such conditions, as  
 it could be proper for God thus to reserve,  
 which the damn’d shall ever be capable of

230 *The Objections, against the Eternity*

*W* Ser. 7. performing. Nay, if God be at perfect liberty, even without any condition, to recede, as far as ever he pleaseth, from these threatnings; yet still there is abundantly more reason to believe, that he will not in the least recede, than that he will. And where then is the hope of the wicked, in this case?

And thus I have gone through this great and important subject of *hell-torments*: and, I hope, have said enough upon it, if not to satisfy mens curiosity, yet, which is much better, to satisfy their reason, and confirm their belief, and excite their fears, and quicken their diligence in *working out their salvation*; which are the great ends, which we are to aim at, in all our discourses upon this, and such like subjects. It is indeed a very grievous consideration, to think how willing men are to deceive and impose upon themselves, by superficial and false reasonings, in a case of such infinite concernment, as this is. But let not them be more ready to deceive themselves, than we, whose duty it is to *watch over them for their good*, shall be to undeceive them. The *terrors of the Lord* are so proper a topic to persuade men, that we cannot

cannot insist too often, or too much upon Ser. 7. them. And, *whether men will bear, or whether they will forbear*, we are to be instant, in season and out of season, in warning them to consider, at their utmost peril, what the end of those men will be, who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance of them, that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. <sup>1 Pet. 4. 17.</sup> <sup>2 Thess. 7. 8, 9.</sup>

I cannot shut up this important subject better, than with a most *pathetical* exhortation of that pious father, St. Chrysostom, in relation to hell-torments. 'Oh madness! oh stupid and brutal folly, faith he, to love pleasure and sin so well, as to be uneasy under the thoughts of these things! Hence come all our odd opinions about them: and were we but once resolv'd to become truly virtuous, we should soon believe, without the least doubting, that there is such a place as hell to be? Alas! what does that con-



232 *The Objections, against the Eternity*

Ser. 7 *cern thee? Our great business is to inquire, whether it shall really be or no; not where will be the particular place of its situation. Let us not therefore spend our time in enquiring where it is, but rather in enquiring how we may avoid it. Nor let us disbelieve future punishments, because God does not punish all sinners in this life. For God is merciful and long-suffering, and therefore threatens, but doth not immediately execute his threatnings. I have no pleasure, faith God, in the death of a sinner; but this very saying is a proof, that there is such a thing as the death of a sinner: otherwise it would be superfluous. I know, that nothing is more displeasing to you, than such discourses as these; but to me nothing is more pleasant. And I heartily wish, that at dinner, at supper, in all places and conversations, we would accustom our selves, to discourse concerning hell. For then, we should never be too much griev'd with the calamities, nor taken with the pleasures of this life. For what is poverty, sickness, captivity, blindness, to the torments of hell? To be starved with famine, to be blind from*  
*our*

' our youth, to be forc'd to beg our bread, Ser. 7.  
 ' what is all this? even not worth speaking ~~~~~  
 ' of, if compar'd with the miseries of that  
 ' place. Let us then be continually dis-  
 ' coursing about these things; and our  
 ' thus keeping up the remembrance of hell,  
 ' in our minds, will prevent our falling  
 ' into it. But, perhaps you'll say, we  
 ' grant that there is an hell, but then it  
 ' is only for unbelievers. But, pray tell  
 ' me, why so? Is it because believers have  
 ' own'd their Lord? But what good will  
 ' this do them? For if they lead wicked  
 ' lives, they shall suffer greater punish-  
 ' ments, than unbelievers. *That servant,*  
 ' *who knew his Lord's will, but did it*  
 ' *not, shall be beaten with many stripes.*  
 ' Why then do'st thou jest, in serious mat-  
 ' ters? Why do'st thou deceive thy self,  
 ' and destroy thy soul, by false reasonings?  
 ' Why do'st thou oppose the goodness of  
 ' God, who has prepar'd and threatned  
 ' hell for this very end, that we, being  
 ' made better by the fears of it, may not  
 ' fall into it? He therefore, that hinders  
 ' our discoursing about this, doth, in ef-  
 ' fect, force and thrust us into it. Do not  
 ' therefore weaken the hands of those, that  
 ' labour

234 *The Objections, against the Eternity*

Ser. 7. ‘ labour for virtue, nor sooth the laziness  
 ‘ of those, who are, as it were, asleep in  
 ‘ their sins. For if men are once perswa-  
 ‘ ded, that there is no such place as hell,  
 ‘ when will they ever quit their sins? Let  
 ‘ us therefore forbear this ridiculous way  
 ‘ of proceeding, and stop the mouths of  
 ‘ all such, as speak against hell. For there  
 ‘ will be a strict inquiry after our good  
 ‘ and bad deeds, nay, even after the very  
 ‘ smallest of them. Unchast looks, idle  
 ‘ words, simple reproaches, evil desires,  
 ‘ drunkenness, &c. must all be accounted  
 ‘ for, and punish’d. How then do you  
 ‘ dare to say that God, who is so exact a  
 ‘ searcher and tryer of our lives, has only  
 ‘ threatned hell, but that there is really no  
 ‘ such thing? Do not, I beseech you do  
 ‘ not, destroy your self, and all that shall  
 ‘ be perswaded by you, by such vain  
 ‘ hopes. If you will not believe us, ask  
 ‘ the *Jews*, the *Greeks*, all sorts of he-  
 ‘ reticks; and they will all, with one  
 ‘ mouth, make answer, that there shall be  
 ‘ a future judgment, and state of retribu-  
 ‘ tion. Or, if the evidence of men be not  
 ‘ sufficient, ask the very devils themselves;  
 ‘ and you shall hear them crying out, *Why*  
 ‘ art

*' art thou come to torment us, before our Ser. 7.  
' time ? Wherefore, putting all these  
' things together, perswade your self not  
' to trifle any longer, lest you should be  
' at last convinc'd by experience, that there  
' is an hell. But learn from hence to be  
' sober, that so thou mayest both avoid  
' the torments of that place, and obtain  
' the happiness of heaven. Through the  
' grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus  
' Christ: to whom, with the Father and  
' the Holy Spirit, be all honour, power  
' and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.*





## S E R M O N VIII.

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*Preach'd before Her MAJESTY,  
when she was Princess of  
Denmark, at St. James's.*

---

The Nature and Blessedness of  
Poverty of Spirit.

---

MATTHEW V. 3.

*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs  
is the kingdom of heaven.*



HUS doth that divine *prea-*  
*cher of righteousness*, Christ  
Jesus, begin, that best of ser-  
mons that ever was or ever  
will be preach'd in this  
world, his sermon on the *Mount*. He had  
just



just before enter'd upon his *prophetical* Ser. 8. office of *revealing* and *expounding* to men the *will* of God, as we read in the 17th verse of the foregoing chapter, *from that time began Jesus to preach*. And behold! no sooner had he undertaken this important office, but he dischargeth it to a miracle, *speaking so, as never man*, before him, *Job. 7: spake*, and comprizing in few words, more<sup>46.</sup> than all the wise men of old had amass'd together, in their vast volumes of *philosophy*.

Having withdrawn himself from the noise and tumult of the multitude, which flock'd to him from all parts about *Jerusalem*, he *retires* to a *private* mountain, *Matt. 4.* and there instructs his disciples, and in them<sup>25.</sup> all christians that should ever come into the world, in a short, but sure, way to true and everlasting happiness.

But, instead of propounding such ways to happiness, as were agreeable to those notions which mankind had of it; he goes a quite contrary way to work, and pronounceth that to be the direct road to happiness, which both *Jews* and *Gentiles* look'd upon, just on the contrary, as the certain road to misery. But so it was, *the 2 C. 1. 3.*  
*wisdom*<sup>19.</sup>

Ser. 8. *wisdom of this world was foolishness with*  
 ~~~~~ *God* : what men thought their happiness,  
 was indeed their greatest misery ; and those
 things which they avoided, as the main
 hindrances of their happiness, were the
 only means by which it could be obtain'd.
 Their high thoughts and great desires,
 their *mirth* and *jollity*, their freedom from
pain and *trouble*, in which they placed so
 considerable a part of their happiness, must
 now be changed into *poverty of spirit*,
weeping and mourning, *affliction* and *per-*
 ver. 3, 4, *secutions* ; or else, divine wisdom itself has
 10, 11. declar'd they cannot be truly happy.

Now that this Doctrine, which was not
 like to take much with a sensual world,
 might not be wholly slighted and neglect-
 ed, our Saviour wisely sets a Blessing be-
 fore it ; well knowing how fond men na-
 turally are of any thing that looks like hap-
 piness, and how likely they would be to
 give entertainment to his doctrine, if not
 for its own, yet for the blessing's sake.
 Nay, he recommends it, by annexing to it
 the very greatest of blessings, even nothing
 less than the kingdom of heaven itself.

The first thing necessary, in order to
 our obtaining this *evangelical happiness*,
 is

is *poverty of spirit*; for this our Lord Ser. 8. himself placeth first, beginning his Sermon with these words of my text, *Blessed are the poor in spirit.*

What this *poverty of spirit* is, which our blessed Lord had in such great esteem, that he thought it not too much thus to dignify it with the first place amongst his *beatitudes*, is a little disputed by learned men. Some taking the word *poor* to be us'd here, in a *borrowed* and *metaphorical* sense, to signify the *humble* and *lowly* man; others earnestly contending for the strict and proper sense of it, as it signifieth an *indigent*, *needy* person, one who is destitute of riches, and in mean circumstances, as to his outward condition in this world. If we take the word *poor* in the first sense, then to be *poor in spirit*, or in *mind* (for so we are to understand the word *spirit* here, and in many other places of scripture) is to be *meek and lowly in heart*, not *proud in spirit*, as the wise man expresseth it, not high-minded or self-conceited. *Ecc. 7. 8.* If in the other sense; then to be *poor in spirit*, is to be willing to undergo all the hardships and inconveniencies of poverty, to have a mind that will stoop to our condition,

Ser. 8. dition, how low soever it is, and patiently and contentedly acquiesce in it. There is a third sense likewise, which some men give to this grace of *poverty of spirit*; taking it to be that disposition of mind, which is opposite to anger; (and that chiefly, because the word *spirit* is sometimes used in scripture to signify *anger*) but this sense seeming more properly to belong to meekness, which is recommended to us by our Saviour, at the 12th verse of this Chapter, I shall not insist upon it here, but content my self with the two other senses of *poverty of spirit*, which I have before given.

And both these have such very fair reasons, as well as great authorities, to support them, that I shall not take upon me at present to determine in favour of either; but shall make choice of the former only for the subject of my following discourse, and consider *poverty of spirit* no farther, than as it signifies a very mean and low opinion of our selves, and of every thing that may properly be call'd ours. And, in considering it under this notion, I shall endeavour,

First, To describe to you the *man* who may be truly said to be *poor in spirit*.

Secondly,

Secondly, To shew for what reason our Ser. 8. Saviour gave this grace of *poverty of spirit* the *pre-eminence* of all other christian graces, and assign'd the first place and blessing to it.

Thirdly, I shall make use of several motives, and more especially that glorious one offered in my text, to persuade men to use their utmost endeavours, for the obtaining of this gracious disposition of mind. And,

Fourthly and *Lastly*, I shall conclude all, with a short address to three sorts of persons, who seem more especially to want this grace of *poverty of spirit*.

First then, He may be truly said to be *poor in spirit*, who constantly bears in mind, that he is a creature; that he receiv'd his very *being*, together with all the endowments and ornaments of it, from God, and is continually obliged to him for his preservation of them, and for all manner of good things that befall him. That whatever external or internal excellencies he may be possess'd of above others (whether *wealth, beauty, high birth, wit, judgment, good nature*, or the like) they are all the free-gifts of providence; that he has no propriety in them, no just claim

Ser 8. or title to them; and therefore that it highly-
 ~~~~~ becometh him, having thus received them  
 from another, neither to make his boasts  
 of them, nor value himself upon them,  
 1 Cor. 4. 7. as if he had not *receiv'd* them. That  
 he is a finite creature, circumscrib'd  
 within narrow bounds and limits, which he  
 cannot exceed; that the eyes of his under-  
 standing are dim, his faculties weak, and  
 his powers short. Nay farther yet, that  
 in that fall'n state, into which his fore-fa-  
 ther's sin has degraded him, he is become  
 a very imperfect creature, and extremely  
 apt to run into errors and mistakes, even  
 about those things, which do fall within  
 the compass of his nature.

Who is possess'd with a deep and lowly  
 sense of the miserable condition, which he  
 is in by nature; who seriously considers  
 If. 15. 5. that he was *conceiv'd in sin*, and brought  
 forth in iniquity; that he is *by nature* an  
 Rom. 5. enemy to God, and a *child of wrath*, so  
 10.  
 Eph. 2. 3. horribly *vitiating* and *deprav'd*, that, in  
*himself* consider'd, he is utterly incapable  
 2 Cor. 3. of *doing* any *good thing*, or so much as  
 5.  
 Phil. 3. 13. *thinking* any *good thought*; that whatever  
 Jam. 1. 13, is *good or commendable*, either in his thoughts  
 14, 15. or his performances, is more God's than his;  
 but

but whatsoever is bad, truly and solely his Ser. 2.  
own: and therefore that the glory of the  
good ought to be ascrib'd to God, and the  
shame of the bad taken to himself. Who most  
sincerely believeth, and thankfully acknow-<sup>Rom 5.</sup>  
ledgeth, that it is *by grace* that he is fav'd;<sup>24.</sup>  
and that that eternal happiness, which he  
hopes for after death in another life, is by  
no means a debt to his *merits*, but the<sup>Eph. 2.</sup>  
free and undeserved *gift* of his most com-<sup>8.</sup>  
passionate and bountiful father towards<sup>Rom. 6.</sup>  
him.<sup>25.</sup>

Who, as to himself in particular, being  
conscious of his own many frailties and im-  
perfections, failings and infirmities, wilful  
transgressions and presumptuous sins, is al-  
ways ready to cry out with St. *Paul*, un-<sup>Eph. 3. 8.</sup>  
der a mortifying sense of his *own unwor-*  
*thiness*, that he is *less than the least of all*  
*saints*; that is, is apt to have a very mean  
opinion of his own attainments in *piety*  
and *virtue*, to think them much short of  
what they ought to be, much short of what  
many others have attain'd to. (And this  
is what St. *Paul* means, in other places  
of his epistles, by thinking *soberly* of our  
selves, *as we ought to think*, and in low-<sup>Rom. 12.</sup>  
*liness of mind esteeming others better than*<sup>Phil. 2. 3.</sup>

Ser. 8. *ourselves.*) Who distrusts his own judgment, which has so often deceived him; is fearful of following his own will too rashly, which has so often *led him out of the way*; and is extremely jealous of his passions and affections, which have so often hurry'd him into sin and folly. Who is always suspicious of himself, and not only willing, but desirous, both to hear and follow the advice of others; whose judgment he can easily be perswaded to set a greater value upon, than upon his own.

To be short; Who, knowing himself to be a very vain and foolish creature, is contented to be thought so by other people, can patiently hear himself disparaged, and is as vile and contemptible in his own eyes, as he ought in any reason to be in the eyes of other men. To say all at once; Who seriously considers, that *every man, at his best state, is altogether vanity*; and that he *himself is vanity of vanities*.

Is. 39. 5.

This is a true, tho' a very imperfect character of the man that is *poor in spirit*; and, from this character of him, it will be no hard matter to shew,

*Secondly*, For what reasons our Saviour gave this grace of *poverty of spirit* the  
pre-

*pre-eminence* of all other christian graces, Ser. 8. and assign'd the first place and blessing to it. And this, I think, he might very well do, for these following.

*First*, Because *humbleness of mind*, or *poverty of spirit*, is the foundation of all religion. Religion is nothing else, but an entire resignation of our selves to the will of God, in all things; a perfect submission to his laws, and an awful adoration of his *being*. And there is nothing which I know of, that can oblige men to this, but a modest and humble sense of the infinite distance that there is between God and them, and of their entire reliance and dependance upon him. If they are not very well satisfy'd, that they were at first the *work of his hands*, and are now continually sustain'd by his *providence*; that they are wholly subject to his government and disposal, and liable to be rewarded or punish'd by him, when and as he shall think fit; we shall find it a very hard matter to persuade them either to obey or worship him. But if once they are truly possess'd with this *mean* and *low*, this *poor* and *mortifying* opinion of themselves, their *obedience* will naturally follow their *hu-*

Ser. 8. *mility*; and their sense of their insufficiency will soon put them upon imploring the *assistance*, and acknowledging the *goodness* of him, from whom all their sufficiency must be deriv'd. And therefore our blessed Lord, like a wise *master-builder*, began here, and made choice of this for the *head stone of the corner*, upon which, he knew, he might afterwards easily raise a fair and steady fabrick of virtue and religion. He laid this law first, saith St. Chrysostom, as a strong and sure foundation, upon which he might afterwards build whatever else he should think fit.

Chrysost.  
in loc.

*Secondly*, Because this was an excellent preparative for the reception and entertainment of *christianity*; and that upon these two accounts;

*First*, As it serv'd to remove those prejudices, which both *Jews* and *Gentiles* had pre-conceiv'd against the *person* and *doctrine* of our Saviour. He knew very well, that he should make another sort of a figure in the world than the *Jews*, thro' a wrong interpretation of their prophets, expected from their *Messiah*; and that the maxims of his doctrine would be, in great measure, directly opposite to all the maxims



xims of the *Gentile* wisdom ; and that, for Ser. 8.  
these reasons, he should become to the *Jews* a *stumbling block*, and to the *Greeks*,<sup>23.</sup>  
or *Gentiles*, *foolishness*. And therefore he  
begins his prophetic office, with admo-  
nishing men to be *modest* and *humble*, *meek*  
and *lowly*, and to entertain but *poor* and  
*mean* opinions of themselves ; that so by  
this means he might, if possible, keep  
them from becoming stiff and obstinate in  
their prejudices, and incline them, upon a  
modest and humble sense of the frailties  
and imperfections of their *natures*, the  
*blindness* and *uncertainty* of their *judg-*  
*ments*, and their *liableness* to *errors* and  
*mistakes*, at least to believe it *possible*,  
that they might have been in the *wrong*,  
and to *try* whether he was in the *right*,  
or no. Wisely considering that, till *pride*  
and *self-conceit* were taken out of the way,  
there could be no room for that doctrine,  
which was to prove all the *wisdom of this*  
*world* to be *mere foolishness*. And ac-  
cordingly we find, it happened in the e-  
vent ; very few of the *Jews* embracing the  
gospel, because it came not attended with  
that *outward* pomp and grandeur, which  
they expected, and had fix'd their hearts  
R A upon ;

Ser. 8. upon ; and hardly any of the more learned  
 among the *heathen* submitting to it at first;  
 but rather *mocking* and *deriding* it, be-  
 cause it preach'd new things to them, who  
 vainly conceited that they knew *all* things;  
 and *destroy'd their wisdom*, who thought  
 themselves the only wise men ; and *brought*  
*to nothing their understanding*, who had  
 long pass'd in the world, for the masters  
 of *prudence*.

*Acts* 17.  
 18. 19.

*I Cor.* 1.  
 18.

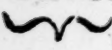
*Secondly*, As it serv'd to convince men  
 of their *spiritual poverty* and wants, and  
 consequently *inclin'd* them to hearken to  
*Christ*, who came with offers of a large and  
 liberal supply for them. The *conceited*  
 man is so *full* always of the advantages  
 and perfections of his own condition, that  
 he is very apt to think it incapable of be-  
 ing better'd, and is so far from *thanking*,  
 that he laughs at, those who kindly pro-  
 fer to *assist* and *mend* it. With the church  
 of *Laodicea*, he saith that he is *rich and*  
*has need of nothing, and knoweth not, that*  
*he is wretched, and miserable, and poor,*  
*and blind, and naked.* And just thus was  
 it with the *Jews* who were so extrava-  
 gantly puff'd up with the conceit of the  
 perfection of those privileges and advan-  
 tages,

*Rev* 3 17.

tages, which they enjoy'd under the *Mo-* Ser. 8.  
*saic* dispensation, that they contemn'd and   
 rejected our *Saviour*, with a scornful *Dost* Joh. 9. 34.  
*thou teach us?* When nevertheless the ad-  
 vantages, which he offer'd them, were real-  
 ly as much more excellent than those which  
 they had from the law of *Moses*, as a *sub-*  
*stance* is than its *shadow*, as *spiritual* things  
 than *carnal*, and as *temporal* things than  
*eternal*. Infomuch, that the law is said  
 to have had *no glory* in respect of the glo- 2 Cor. 3.  
*ry* of the gospel, which so far excelleth it. 10.  
 And well had it been for the *Jews*, if  
 they could have been made sensible of this,  
 and if the mistaken fancy of the perfecti-  
 on of the state which they were then under,  
 had not hindred them from going on, as  
 our blessed Lord earnestly exhorted them,  
 and shewed them the true way to real per-  
 fection.

But now the case of the *humble* man is  
 quite otherwise; he is always deeply con-  
 scious of his own *poverty* and *insufficiency*,  
*wretchedness* and *misery*, and most earnest-  
 ly desirous to *embrace* and *improve* all  
 opportunities of *amending* and *bettering*  
 his condition.

To

Ser. 8. To the humble then, and to them alone,  our Lord foresaw his offers of new light, grace and salvation, would be acceptable and welcome : and therefore, being desirous that all men should partake of these, his first care was to prepare and qualify the minds of all men for them. He reminds them of their own poverty, that so they might the more thankfully accept the riches of his goodness : of their own darkness and obscurity, that so they might *rejoice in his marvellous light* : of their own inability to help and save themselves, that so they might become *exceeding glad of his salvation*.

*Thirdly*, Because this grace of *poverty of spirit*, being once firmly settled and rooted in the minds of men, would, not only dispose them to receive Christ for their Saviour, but would likewise afterwards be a constant spur to their endeavours, and mightily quicken their attention, care and diligence, both in learning and obeying all his future commands. Every *wise teacher* is especially careful, at the beginning of his instructions, to instill some such *general* principles into the minds of his *disciples*, as may be of universal use  
and

and influence, in the whole sequel of them. Ser. 8.  
And of this nature is humility, in the school of christianity; which, teaching us not to be high-minded, but to fear, and, when we stand most upright, to *take heed lest we fall*, makes us pass watchfully and cautiously through all the stages of our *christian warfare*, improve all opportunities of *growing in grace*, and in the *knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, and give all diligence, to make our calling and election sure.

Lastly, Because it was the want of this poverty of spirit, that was the occasion of sins first entering into the world. The worlds, I might have said: since that above, as well as this below, was first defil'd, and basely stain'd by pride. Never could those once *all glorious beings*, the *fall'n angels*, who are now *eternally condemn'd* and *chain'd* to hell, have entertain'd so much as the least thought of rebelling against God, had they not first cast off all sober sense of their own condition, and vainly conceited that they might become, what in the nature of things was impossible, *like the most high*. And never could unhappy man have lost his innocency,



Ser. 8. nocency, had he been but careful to preserve his humility. But it was the devil's policy, first to rob him of this, and then of that: first to *puff* him up with *pride*, and to make him believe that he need not fear God, but might himself be as God; and then to make him guilty of the foulest ingratitude and most fatal rebellion against him. When therefore our blessed Saviour was about to enter into a new, and better covenant with man, that he might not forfeit his title to this, as he had done to the former, he bids him in the first place to beware of *pride*: to consider seriously with himself, how many and how great evils this had already brought in upon him, and, considering this, to be so wise and cautious, as not to split twice upon the same rock. Since *pride*, saith St. Chrysostom, *had been the source and spring of all our mischiefs*, our Saviour here *first recommends humility to his disciples, as the best preservative against all such evils for the future.*

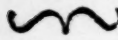
Chrysost.  
in loc.

These are some of those reasons, which probably might induce our Saviour to set so great a value as he did, upon this grace of *poverty of spirit*. And these all plainly

ly tend to convince us of the great usefulness and excellency, nay, indeed of the absolute necessity, of this grace; it being so evident that, where-ever this obtains, there piety and virtue, there our duty, and with that our true and everlasting interest, must naturally thrive and prosper: and on the contrary, that where-ever this is wanting, there ingratitude and rebellion become bold and daring, the devil *tempts* and *prevails*, *sin is brought forth*, and *sin*, <sup>1 Jam. 15.</sup> being *finish'd*, *bringeth forth death*. I shall need therefore, surely, to spend but very little time.

*Thirdly*, In making use of several motives, and more especially that glorious one offer'd in my text, to perswade men to use their utmost endeavours, for the obtaining of this gracious disposition of mind. And,

*First*, Let us consider the great *reasonableness* of this duty of *humbleness of mind*: which requires us to think of God, our neighbours, and our selves, no otherwise, than as is exactly agreeable to our respective natures and conditions. Is not God infinitely above us? Did he not create us? Doth he not continually sustain and preserve

 Ser. 8. preserve us? May not he do what he will with his own? Is he not *Lord of heaven and earth*: and may he not therefore *fulfil all his will in both*? May he not call his own creatures to account, for obeying or disobeying his will, and reward or punish them accordingly? Nay, has he not expressly told us, that he *will* do this? And what then can possibly be more reasonable, than to think and believe all this of him: and so habitually to think and believe it too, that it may have its due influence upon our whole lives and conversations?

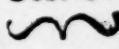
Do not many of our neighbours appear to be much better than we our selves are? can we possibly know their faults, so well as we do our own? Do we not find a great many arguments within our selves, to beat down our high opinion of our selves, which we cannot equally find, to lessen our good opinion of our neighbours? And is it not then most just and equitable, that we should often *in honour prefer* our  
 Rom. 12. 10. neighbours to our selves, and never, without the most apparent reason, prefer our selves to them?

As to our selves ; are we not creatures ? Ser. 8.  
 Are we not sinners ? Have not all, e-  
 ven the very best of us, great failings and  
 imperfections ? Are we not, in our selves  
 consider'd, wretched and miserable, and  
 poor, and blind, and naked ? And are not  
 these considerations enough, to humble and  
 abase us to the utmost ? Can we think  
 that *pride was made for man* ? Shall *sin-<sup>Eccles. 10.</sup>*  
*ful dust and ashes* dare to be proud ? Are <sup>18.</sup>*Isai. 64.6.*  
 the *filthy rags of our righteousness* fit to  
 be glory'd in ? Much more, can we think  
 it reasonable to glory in our *shame* ? No <sup>Phil. 3.</sup>  
 certainly, to the very best of us rather be-<sup>19.</sup>  
 longeth *confusion of face* : because *we* <sup>Dan. 9. 7.</sup>  
*have sinned against the Lord our God, and* <sup>8, 9, 10.</sup>  
*have not obeyed his voice, to walk in the*  
*laws, which he set before us.*

*Secondly,* The example of our blessed  
 Saviour, and the more than ordinary ear-  
 nestness, with which he commands us to  
 endeavour after this grace, ought mightily  
 to recommend it to us. How carefully  
 did he, who had the greatest reason, that  
 ever man had or can have, to think well of  
 himself : because he *did no sin, neither* <sup>1 Pet. 2. 22.</sup>  
*was guile found in his mouth* ; how care-  
 fully did he, I say, prove himself to the  
 world,

Ser. 8. world, to be *meek and lowly in heart* :  
 Matt. 11. 29. and avoid every the least appearance of  
 pride and self-conceit ; refusing even  
 so much as the appellation of good, lest  
 he should seem to have too high an esteem  
 of himself, and to inroach too much up-  
 on the *divine perfections* and *glory* ? How  
 Matt. 19. 17. did his constant endeavours to shun the  
*praise of men*, and his industrious ascrib-  
 ing all the glory, that was offer'd him, to  
 God : how did the meanness of his whole  
 Phil. 2. 5, 6, 7, 8. life, how did the *pain* and *ignominy* of his  
*death*, which he sustain'd with so much  
*patience*, *contentedness*, and entire *resig-*  
*nation* to the *will* of God, set him forth  
 as a bright and most perfect pattern of *hum-*  
 I Pet. 2. 21, 23, 24. *bleness of mind* ? And did he not *leave us*  
*his example*, for this very purpose, *that*  
*we might follow his steps* ? Has he not  
 himself call'd upon us, to *learn* of *him* to  
 Luk. 22. 26. be *meek and lowly in heart* ? Did he not  
 9. 48. most severely check all lofty and aspiring  
 Mat. 23. 12. thoughts, in his disciples ? Did he not *en-*  
*courage*, to the utmost, all *modest* and  
*humble* ones ? Was not *poverty of spirit*  
 his first lesson to 'em ? Was it not his con-  
 tinual topic, in all his discourses with  
 them ? Has he not declar'd it one of the  
*prime*



*prime* qualifications, for his kingdom? Ser. 2.  
And how then can we ever do too much,   
for the attainment of it?

*Lastly*, The beneficial fruits, and advantages both temporal and spiritual, of this grace, must needs wonderfully commend and endear it to us. As will sufficiently appear, from barely mentioning some of the chief of them. As,

*First*, That this grace is the foundation of all worldly contentment. The great reason why men are at any time dissatisfied with their worldly condition is, because they think they deserve much better of providence, or at least, that they are not so well us'd by it, as their neighbours; who, their vanity makes them apt to think, are not, by much, so deserving as themselves. Whereas alas! had men but once attain'd to a true sense and judgment of themselves; had they but once learn'd to *think soberly of themselves, as they ought to think*: they would soon acknowledge the worst state of life to be too good for them, and not only be contented with, but even rejoice in, and be thankful for, the very least of all God's mercies: as well knowing them, how little soever, to be

Ser. 8. still beyond their deserts, still too good for  
 ~~~~~ such vile and sinful creatures, as they are.

Secondly, This grace will be sure to procure us the esteem and love of all men. It will make us willing to stoop to all, even the lowest offices of friendship and charity : thankful for all, even the smallest acts of kindness and civility : and extremely courteous, obliging and condescending, to all persons of whatsoever rank or fortune. It will teach us to give place and preference to others ; it will not suffer an haughty spirit of opposition and contradiction to reign amongst us : but it will so sweetly influence and qualify our whole conversation and deportment towards men, and render our behaviour so affable, pleasing and useful, in all instances : that we shall no sooner be known, than we shall be admir'd : no faster get acquaintance, than friendship and respect. So far is humility from degrading any man, as some who were never acquainted with it pretend, that, let our condition be never so high, this will still raise it to an higher pitch. *Before honour is humility*, saith Solomon, and again, *honour shall uphold the*

Prov. 18.

12.

29. 23.

the

the humble in spirit But, which is more, ^{ser. 8.}
infinitely more valuable,

Thirdly, This will, in a most peculiar manner, recommend us to the favour and love of God: who has taken frequent occasions in scripture, to shew how great a value he sets upon this grace, and how dear the possessours of it are to him. *God* ^{Job 22.}
shall save the humble person, saith *Eli-* ^{9.}
phaz to *Job*: *he forgetteth not the cry of the humble, but heareth their desire.* *The* ^{Psal. 9. 12.}
meek will be guide in judgment, the meek ^{10. 17.}
will he teach his way; saith the Psalmist. ^{25. 9.}
He giveth grace to the humble, saith *St.* ^{Jam. 4. 6.}
James. Nay, such an entire lover is he of them, that he declares, by his prophet *Isaiah*, that he will dwell with him, that ^{Isai. 57.}
is of an humble and contrite spirit, to re- ^{15.}
vive the spirit of the humble, and to re-
vive the heart of the contrite ones. If then, the hope of gaining the love of men will not much move us; yet surely the hope of gaining the love of God must. It must, I say, if we have but so much as one spark of humility remaining in us: for this will be sufficient to make us sensible, what vile and contemptible creatures we are, in our selves consider'd, and how

Ser. 8. much, and how continually we stand in
 ~~~~~ need of the divine favour and assistance;  
 and consequently, this will most strongly  
 incite and provoke us, to use our utmost  
 endeavours for the obtaining of this *hum-  
 bleness of mind*, which is a sure and rea-  
 dy way to entitle us to them.

*Fourthly*, This will be a safeguard and  
 preservative, promoter and encourager, of  
 all goodness and virtue, in us. By increas-  
 ing in us an inward awe and dread of God  
 (whom it will shew us to be our almighty  
 governour and judge) and, with these, a  
 true religious fear of offending and incen-  
 sing his most terrible majesty. By making  
 us distrustful and suspicious of our selves,  
 of our own ability, skill and care : and,  
 for this reason, more than ordinarily dili-  
 gent, discreet, and watchful, in all the  
 duties of our christian life. And *lastly*,  
 by obtaining for us, from the *throne of  
 grace*, which the humble are encourag'd  
 to approach with boldness, such a large  
 and sufficient measure of grace, as will ef-  
 fectually enable us, so to *fight the good  
 fight of faith*, and to *finish our course*,  
 that, in the end, we shall not fail of ob-  
 taining everlasting life. Which is the

*Fifth,*

*Fifth, and last* motive that I shall at Ser. 8. present make use of, to excite your earnest desires and endeavours, after this grace of *poverty of spirit*. *Blessed are the poor in spirit*, saith my text, *for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*; even that kingdom of *everlasting bliss and glory*, which God has prepar'd for all his faithful servants, from *the foundation of the world*. Matt. 25. 34.

Not, that heaven will be the reward of this particular grace of humility, in it self consider'd; but consider'd, as attended with all those graces and virtues, which naturally flow from it, and are sustain'd by it: consider'd, as it is the parent of an universal submission and obedience to God, the fruitful seed of all religion, and the foundation and perfection of all virtue.

'Tis true indeed, by the *kingdom of heaven* here we may understand, the *kingdom* of the *Messiah*, or the church of Christ here on earth: and if so, then the  *blessings* Mat. 3. 2. here promis'd amounts to this; that the *poor in spirit* are those, of whom *Christ's kingdom* must be compos'd; that they alone are of a fit temper and disposition, to constitute his church here on earth. But, in which soever of these senses we take it,



Ser. 8. it will come in the end much to one ; since  
the very same temper of mind, which makes us meet to be partakers of Christ's *grace here*, will make us as meet to be partakers of *glory hereafter* : the very same happy frame and disposition of soul, which fits us to be members of his church militant on earth, will equally fit us to be members of that *triumph nt in heaven*. And who then would not be humble, when his humility shall lift him up as high as heaven? Who would not be thus *abas'd*, to be thus *exalted*? Who would not be thus *cloth'd with humility*, to be thus cloth'd with *everlasting glory*?

And now, having thus fairly represented to you the great and manifold advantages of this grace of *poverty of spirit*, I could hardly allow my self to think so ill of mankind, as that there should be any want of it among them : did not our too common experience, and more particularly three sorts of men, whom I have now in my view, sadly convince me to the contrary. Give me leave then, in charity, to speak a word to each of these, and I have done.

The first fort are those, who are continually bragging of their own righteousness; and lessening and despising other men, as neither meet for, nor enjoying, so large a portion of God's *grace*, nor yet making so good an use of what they do enjoy, as themselves. Like the haughty *Pharisee*, they are apt to thank God, that *they are* Luk. 18. *not as other men*: and like those conceited<sup>11.</sup> wretches, mention'd by the prophet *Isaiah*, to say to their neighbours, *stand by thy* Isai. 65.5. *self, come not near me, for I am holier than thou*. But surely, so far are these men from having any thing of a true christian spirit in them, that they seem not so much as to understand what it means. So far are they from being, as they too often vainly boast, sure of their election, that they plainly want one of the surest marks of it. Our blessed Lord has told us, that his kingdom must be compos'd of none but such as, like himself, are *meek* and Matt. 23. *lowly in heart*: that those who *exalt*<sup>12.</sup> Luk. 18. themselves, shall be *abas'd*; and those, and<sup>14.</sup> those *only*, who *abase* themselves, *exalted*. And therefore I cannot help fearing, that many of those presumptuous persons, who make such a noise and bustle here about

S 4

their

Ser. 8. their righteousness, and boast themselves, as if they had salvation written upon their foreheads by the finger of God himself, will go away at the last day, from the great tribunal, unjustify'd: when the poor humble soul, who has made it the great business of his life to *work out his salvation with fear and trembling*, and has been abundantly more ready to disparage, than to commend himself, shall receive that blessed commendation from God himself, *Well done thou good and faithful servant*: and together with it, the glorious reward of his well-doing, *Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord*.

Phil. 2, 12.

Matt. 25.  
21.

A second sort are those, who fancy their own performances meritorious, and in themselves, without the promise of God, *deserving of eternal life*; insomuch, that God would not be just to them, if, for the sake of their good works, he should not bestow *eternal life* upon them. And surely, if there be such a thing as *spiritual pride* in the world, this is it. For what can we possibly conceive more abominably *presumptuous*, *impudent* and *assuming*, than for *poor miserable sinners*, unable of themselves so much as to do or think any good

good thing, and always guilty of so much Ser. 8.  
 imperfection, even in their very best ser-  
 vices; yet still, to conceit their services to  
 be of worth enough to purchase heaven?  
 Has not our blessed Lord himself told us,  
 that, *when we have done all these things* <sup>Luke 17.</sup>  
*which were commanded us,* we are still to <sup>10.</sup>  
 think our selves *unprofitable servants,*  
*and to have done no more, than it was*  
*our duty to do.* O let us then, at our ut-  
 most peril, beware of puffing up our selves  
 with great thoughts of the merits of our  
 own performances: lest, by so doing, we  
 provoke God to withdraw his grace from  
 us, and to try us by the merits of them;  
 and then we shall soon find our mistake,  
 when it will be too late to correct it, in  
*everlasting misery.*

*Lastly,* There is a third sort of men  
 still behind, no less foolish or dangerous  
 than either of the former, and they are  
 those, who (either out of a mistaken no-  
 tion of the force and extent of the powers  
 and faculties of humane nature, in general;  
 or out of an over-fond opinion of the ex-  
 traordinary acuteness and deep reach of  
 their own, in particular) are apt to grow  
*high-minded,* and to *exercise themselves in*  
*matters,*

Ser. 8. *matters, which are too high for them. To*  
 arraign a God of infinite perfection, be-  
 fore the bar of finite reason, for *ill con-*  
*trivance* and *male-administration*, in his  
*creation* and *government* of the world: to  
 interpret all the dispensations of provi-  
 dence, and make them bear just such mean-  
 ings as best fute with their humours or  
 interests: and to unlock the secrets of all  
 mysteries, though never so abstruse and  
 hidden, or to reject the belief of them,  
 because they cannot, &c. Alas vain man!  
 Who art thou, as it is elegantly express'd  
 in the book of *Job*, *that enjoineſt to God*  
*his way*, or dar'st say unto him, *thou haſt*  
*wrought iniquity*? Who art thou, *that*  
*darkneſt the counſel of the moſt high*, by  
*thy words without knowledge*? Once  
 more, who art thou, that vainly conceit-  
 eſt thy ſelf able to *ſearch thoſe deep things*  
*of God*, which, he himſelf tells us, *no one*  
*knoweth, but his own ſpirit*? Lay aſide  
 thy conceit, thou fooliſh little creature,  
 and be contented at preſent with thy con-  
 dition, to *ſee through a glaſs darkly*:  
 and then it will not be long e're, as a re-  
 ward of thy *modesty* and *humility*, thou  
 ſhalt be taken up into a bright and glori-  
 ous

*Job* 36.  
 23.

38. 2.

1 Cor. 2.  
 10, 11.

1 Cor. 13  
 12.



ous place, where thou shalt see God *face* Ser. 8.  
*to face*, without any *cloud* between, and ~  
shalt *know him*, even as *thou* also *art*  
*known* by him.

To which happy place God, of his *in-*  
*finite mercy*, bring us all, for the  
fake of his dear Son *Jesus Christ*.



S E R-



## S E R M O N IX.

---

Preach'd at St. James's in  
*Lent*, 1698.

---

Worldly Men wiser, in their way,  
than Christians, in theirs.

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St. LUKE xvi. 8. the latter part of  
the verse.

*For the children of this world are, in  
their generation, wiser than the  
children of light.*



AT the beginning of this chapter, from the first verse to the ninth, we have the parable of the *unjust steward*, briefly represented to us, in the following manner. “ A certain rich  
“ man, finding his steward guilty of wast-  
“ ing

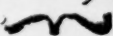
“ ing his goods, commands him to bring Ser. 9.  
“ in his accounts, that so he might reckon ~~~~~  
“ with him, and dismis him his ser-  
“ vice. Whereupon, the steward present-  
“ ly begins to forecast within himself,  
“ what was likely to become of him, and  
“ by what means he might be best able  
“ to provide for his future subsistence and  
“ well-being. Labour, it seems, was not  
“ for his purpose, *dig* he could not ; and  
“ to get a livelihood by begging, was be-  
“ neath him, to *beg* he was ashamed. When  
“ therefore, after much thinking, he could  
“ fix upon no other way, he at last resolves  
“ upon this, to try to make himself friends  
“ of his lord’s debtors ; that so, when he  
“ should be turn’d out of his service, they  
“ might receive him into their houses.  
“ And accordingly, he immediately calls  
“ them unto him, and makes up his lord’s  
“ accounts with them : but, in so easy  
“ and favourable a manner, as, he knew,  
“ would very much incline and oblige them  
“ to be kind to him afterwards. For, instead  
“ of exacting the utmost of their debts, he  
“ abates one a fifth part, another a full half,  
“ and the like proportion, in all probabi-  
“ lity, to all the rest. Which when his  
“ lord

270 *Worldly Men wiser, in their Way,*

Ser. 9. " lord discovered ; altho' he could not but  
 " be angry with him, for dealing so un-  
 " gratefully and unjustly by him ; yet, at  
 " the same time, he could not forbear com-  
 " mending him, for taking such good care,  
 " and making such wise provision for him-  
 " self." *And the Lord commended the*  
*unjust steward, not for his injustice, but*  
*because he had done wisely, φρονίμως, like*  
*one that had his thoughts or wits about*  
*him.*

ΕΙς τὴν  
 2756. v.

From this whole parable thus related,  
 our blessed Saviour takes occasion to make  
 this inference in my text, that the *children*  
*of this world*, those, who chiefly give  
 themselves up to *this* world, and the *things*  
 of it, *are wiser in, or for, their generati-*  
*on*, act more prudently in their way, or  
 in relation to their worldly concerns, *than*  
*the children of light*, than those who, by  
 the light of the gospel, have been taught  
 much better things, have been instructed  
 in a sense of religion, and an *eternal* future  
 state of happiness or misery, and profess  
 that they believe the truth of, obligations  
 to, and necessity of providing for, them,  
 do, in relation to their affairs, and the  
*great*

great and momentous business of their Ser. 9.  
profession. 

Accordingly, I shall consider these words at present, only as they depend upon the parable, and, in so doing,

*First*, I shall enquire what extraordinary instances of *prudence* our Saviour might probably observe, in the *unjust steward's* conduct of himself, which are rarely to be found among the *children of light*, in the management of their affairs, and are therefore a sufficient ground for, and justification of, this his observation.

*Secondly*, I shall examine from what causes it can possibly come to pass, that the *children of this world* should act more prudently, in relation to the things of this world, than *the children of light* do, in relation to those of the other.

*Thirdly*, I shall shew that, altho' the *children of this world* are wiser, in their generation, than the *children of light*; yet they are far from being absolutely and truly wise.

*Lastly*, I shall conclude all with a few words of exhortation, both to the *children of this world*, and the *children of light*.

*First*,



Ser. 9. *First*, I am to enquire what extraordinary instances of *prudence* our Saviour might probably observe, in the *unjust steward's* conduct of himself, which are rarely to be found among the *children of light*, in the management of their affairs, and are therefore a sufficient ground for, and justification of, this his observation. And here I think, without the least straining of the parable, we may fairly insist upon these two general instances, under which we shall find a great many particular ones comprehended.

*First*, His provident concern, thoughtfulness and care for the future.

*Secondly*, His making a true and wise use of money.

*First*, His provident concern, thoughtfulness and care for the future. No sooner did he find himself disappointed of those hopes which probably he had entertain'd, of spending his whole life, all the futurity which he had any notion of, in his lord's service and favour; but he immediately began to look forward, and to lay new projects and designs, for his comfortable subsistence in the remaining part of his days, which now, contrary to his expectations, were

were to be afresh provided for. *My lord, Ser. 9.*  
 faith he, *taketh away from me the stew-*  
*ardship*; as if he had said, the hopes which  
 I once had of taking up my rest in my  
 lord's house, and spending the remainder  
 of my days there, with ease and comfort,  
 are now quite vanish'd; I am command-  
 ed to be gone; thrust naked out of those  
 doors, where I once thought I had *laid up*  
*goods for many years*, and all those fair  
 promises which I had made my self of fu-  
 ture happiness, are come to nothing. *What*  
*then shall I do?* I know not how long I  
 may live; but I would willingly live com-  
 fortably all my days. Were my life now  
 to have an end, my cares might have one  
 too; but, since that may last, I would fain  
 have my happiness last with it; for who  
 can bear the thoughts of living, when life  
 it self shall be a burthen and a torment? Yet  
 this at present is my case; I may have a  
 long stock of life behind, but can foresee  
 nothing but shame and misery to attend  
 it. My days it may be will be many, alas!  
 too many, since they are all so likely to be  
 evil. This cuts me to my heart; this wounds  
 my soul, and makes me dread the very  
 thoughts of living. Something then I must

Ser. 9. do, some foundation of future happiness I must lay; that so, having a reasonable prospect of happiness, as long as I have any prospect of being, I may live now without fear, and, from the seeds of ease and comfort sown at present, reap a plentiful and chearful crop hereafter. Nay, and since I seem to have different degrees of happiness in my power, why should I not aim at the *highest*? Why should I be contented to think only of getting a *bare* livelihood by *labour* or *begging*, when I have an opportunity in my hands of providing amply and comfortably for my self, by securing an interest in all my lord's debtors?

Such were his *thoughts*, and such his *resolutions*; not only *happiness*, but the very *greatest* happiness, which he could think himself capable of obtaining, he made his supreme end. And, because he knew that *resolving* to be happy would not, *of it self*, be *sufficient* to make him so, he therefore stops not here; but immediately proceeds to that which would, *viz.* the *searching* out, and *putting in execution*, such means, as were most fit and proper for the attainment of his end. And here he acts with

with *judgment* and with *courage*. His Ser. 9. *judgment* distinguisheth for him, betwixt such means as were likely to attain his end, and such as were not, and makes him *reject* the one, and *embrace* the other. It was not at all likely, that he, who had so long liv'd an *easy* life, and in the most *creditable* place among his lord's servants, should make any great matter either of *labouring* or *begging*; and therefore he presently *gives over* all thoughts of these. But nothing could be more likely, than that he, who perfectly well knew his Lord's debtors, and probably enough had often tried before, how far they might be *tamper'd* with, in the way which he now thought on, should *bring his ends about* by them; and therefore here he *fixeth* his thoughts and resolutions. His *courage* keeps up his spirits, under the *difficulties* and *disappointments*, which he at first met with, in his search after proper means, for the attainment of his end. And what tho' *labour* and *begging*, which came first into his mind, would not answer his purpose? yet still he plucks up a good heart, and believes there is something else that will. And, upon this belief, he goes on

276 *Worldly Men wiser, in their Way,*

Ser. 9. *undauntedly* and *unweariedly*, to find out what this something else should be. A *third* time therefore he sets himself to thinking, resolving never to be *baffled* and *give over*, nay hardly so much as allowing himself any respite, till he had found out that, which he search'd for; till he had secur'd to himself a *comfortable* prospect of being made *easy* and *happy*, after he should be dismissed his lord's service.

And now, having in his *thoughts* mark'd out the *way* to his desired end, he stays not long before he puts his *theory* into *practice*; but instantly makes towards the happiness which he has now *in view*; and, by a vigorous and seasonable prosecution of those means, which he had found would lead him to it, soon brings himself within the blessed *influences* of it; soon changes his *black* fears of *misery* into *bright* hopes of *happiness*, and his *dread* of life into a *love* and *desire* of it.

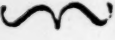
And what, I beseech you, could possibly have been more agreeable to all the rules of *true wisdom*, in his way, that is, upon his notions and suppositions, than *such* a behaviour as this was? For, since all men naturally desire *future* as well as *present*



sent happiness, and are apt to be uneasy Ser. 9.  
and unsatisfied in their minds, till they  
have obtain'd, at least, a *rational hope* of  
such an happiness, as shall run *commensu-*  
*rate* with their beings; and, since the attain-  
ment of such an hope is the most *just* and  
*noble*, and ought to be the principal aim  
of all our thoughts and resolutions, and is  
very much *within the power* of them; who  
can sufficiently commend our unjust steward,  
for directing all his thoughts and enquiries  
this way? For making an happiness as ex-  
tensive as his being, as he thought, the  
*supreme* object of all his projects and con-  
trivances; the *center* which they all tend-  
ed to, and met in.

'Tis true indeed, he unhappily mistook,  
as to his notion of the extent of his being;  
but he acted as wisely, as a man could do  
upon this mistaken notion; and therefore,  
tho' not absolutely wise, yet was *wise in*  
*his generation*, which is all that we at pre-  
sent contend for. Supposing, as he did,  
that the whole happiness of our beings  
consists of, and terminates in, the good  
things of this world, he could not possibly  
take up a wiser resolution, than he did,  
that he would find out some way or o-

278 *Worldly Men wiser, in their Way,*

Ser. 9. ther, of becoming master of a competent  
 share of them.

And, since the greater the happiness, so much the better and more desirable; was it not a truly laudable greatness of mind in him, that would not let him sit down contented with a moderate degree of happiness, when he had reason to think, that there was a greater and more noble degree of it within his reach; but put him upon aspiring earnestly after the *greatest*? And, when he had thus made the greatest happiness, which he could hope for, his *supreme* end: must not every body applaud him, for his *immediate* application of himself, to find out the proper and ready way to it? Must not every body speak well of his undaunted resolution, and unwearied diligence, in his search after this way? For what can become a man *more*, than to lose no time, when he is in pursuit of *happiness*? When will we count it wisdom to exert all our *judgment, industry and courage*, if not then, when we are about securing to ourselves a plain and certain path to happiness for ever?

And then, what greater instance of his wisdom could we have, than his *hastening*,  
 with

with all possible speed, to put those means, Ser. 9. which he found *most likely* to obtain his desir'd end, in execution? Had he wholly omitted this; the other two instances of his wisdom would have come to *nothing*. For what signifieth our *resolving* to be happy, and our *finding* out the means of becoming so; unless we so apply those means, as *actually* to become so? And had he omitted this, only *for a time*, he might perhaps in that time, have lost his opportunity, and ever after call'd himself *fool*, for not using it while he had it *in his hands*. But his resolving to be happy, even as happy as he could be, according to his notions; his *immediate* and *industrious* application of himself, to find out the true means of becoming so, and his *present* and *effectual* application of those means, so as to become so, are abundant proofs and evidences of his *wisdom*.

But alas! how little of this wisdom is there to be found among the *children of light*, in the management of their affairs? How few of them are there, that ever concern themselves as they ought to do, about the *future*; when nevertheless they pretend to believe, that they have a *long fu-*

280 *Worldly Men wiser, in their Way,*

Ser. 9. *turity* behind, even as long as *eternity* itself? How few, who ever seriously ask themselves that question, *What shall I do, when my Lord taketh away from me the stewardship?* when yet they know infallibly, that it cannot be very long before it must, of course, be taken from them? How little do they live, as if they were to live for ever? How little care do they take, to lay in such a stock of *happiness*, as will hold out with their beings, to all *eternity*; when yet they profess they believe, that it must be done *now* or *never*, and that they cannot live with any *ease, comfort* and *satisfaction*, till they see it done. *Vain* and *foolish* creatures! to *complain* of their own folly, and not to *mend* it; to see eternal happiness within their reach, and yet scarce to put on so much as one *serious* and *steady* resolution, of *using* their *utmost* endeavours to *obtain* and *possess* it.

Or, if they do happen to aim and resolve well in the main; yet what little care do they take about setting their aims so *high* as they ought to do; or even putting their resolutions, such as they are, into *practice*? *Eternal happiness* they can't but own to be the best and noblest end of man.

But

But then they seem perfectly *indifferent*, Ser. 9. what *degree* of this happiness shall be *theirs*: let them but get into heaven *at all*; and it is much at one to them, whether the glory of the *stars*, the glory of the *moon*, or the glory of the *sun*, is to be *their* glory. Nay, and if they do at last act so wisely, as to pronounce the very *highest* degree of happiness and glory, which they are capable of, to be their *supreme* end; yet how dilatory frequently are they, in *searching* out, how *awkward* in *judging* of, how soon *discouraged* and *beaten off* from their *quest* after the true means of obtaining it? *Any* time, God knows, rather than the *present*, is generally allotted for *this*; and *any* means, rather than *those*, which are most plainly *fit* and *proper*, generally pitch'd upon. The *future* time, which is wholly out of our power is but too commonly destin'd for this *important* work: and every *other* way to this end shall be rather try'd, than *holiness* in all manner of conversation, which is both in its own *nature* so proper to lead us to it, and, without which, God himself has assured us, it will be *impossible* ever to arrive at it. And then, how apt are most  
christians



Ser 9. christians to give over their search, even after this way to the greatest of happinesses, if they chance to meet with ever so little *difficulty* or *opposition* in it? If they do not immediately find out a very ready and easy passage into heaven; it is great odds but they grow either *indifferent* or *impatient*, either think it hardly worth their while to take any *farther* care about it, or despair that their care will be to *any* purpose? If they cannot promise themselves, that they shall be able, by *one* or *two* assaults, to take the kingdom of heaven; they often want courage to believe that a *third* however might prove effectual, and rather pitifully submit to *forego* even their hopes of heaven itself, than to resolve upon these *severe* and *violent* methods of *attaining* it. Foolish *dilatoriness* indeed! to *put off* the study of the *way* to heaven, so much as one moment. Base and sottish *cowardise*! to let our spirits fail us, even in sight of it.

But more foolish yet is that *dilatoriness*, which is but too too common among the *children of light*, and makes them *omit* the use of those very means, which they *acknowledge* to be *proper*, and therefore  
*resolve*

resolve to pursue, so long, till they have, Ser. 9.  
 either in part, or perhaps wholly, lost the opportunity of using them. More *sottish*  
 still is that *cowardise*, which suffers them  
 to grow *weary*, *faint*, and *desist*, when  
 they have their *means*, as well as their  
*end*, plain before them. To what purpose  
 do they look into the *book of life*, to learn  
 from thence, *what they must do to inherit*  
*eternal life*, and there find it plainly writ-  
 ten, *if thou wilt enter into life, keep the* <sup>Matt. 19.</sup>  
*commandments* ; and yet, after all, either <sup>17.</sup>  
 not apply themselves to the *keeping* of  
 them, till it is become exceeding *difficult*,  
 if not *impossible*, to keep them ; or, at  
 least, apply themselves so faintly, as not  
 to be able to keep them *unto the end* ?  
 Oh ! how much *wiser* would it be, with  
 the *unjust steward*, not only to resolve to  
 be happy, but *immediately* and *unwea-*  
*riedly* to search out the right way of be-  
 coming so, and *immediately* and *unwea-*  
*riedly* to prosecute that way, so as to be-  
 come so ? For we can never be put too  
 soon into possession of a *well-grounded hope*  
 of eternal happiness, never do enough for  
 it. But I have been too long upon this first  
 head, and therefore must only just mention,  
 Secondly,

Ser. 9. *Secondly*, The other instance of the *un-just steward's* wisdom, which was, *his making a true and wise use of money.* And that, in short, was, by disposing of it so, that it might ever after (ever, I mean, according to his notion of it) be of advantage to him. For this it is plain he had an entire regard to, in remitting to his lord's debtors so great a part of their respective debts, as we are told in the parable he did. *I am resolv'd what to do,* saith he, *that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.* As if he had said, I have now in my power a sum of money, which I will so dispose of, as to make it a security, for my future subsistence and well-being, as long as I shall live. And accordingly he immediately layeth it out so, as he knew would best serve this end.

And how can a man possibly better put his money out to use, than by buying everlasting friends with it? This is to make riches indeed a substantial good; so to fix them, as that, with all their wings, they shall not be able to fly away; and to make the very utmost advantage, and that certainly is the wisest use, that can possibly be

be made, of them. And therefore this Ser. 9. instance of wisdom our Lord explicitly insists upon, and most pathetically recommends to his disciples ver. 9. *And I say unto you, Make to your selves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.*

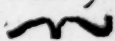
And yet alas! how few of the *children of light* are there, that act with due regard to this rule? How few, that are like to fare the better for their wise disposal of their money: *when their stewardship shall be taken from them?* How few, that distribute so, as to lay up for themselves a good foundation, against the time to come, that they may attain eternal life.

In vain then do the *children of light* pretend to manage their affairs, with as much wisdom, as the *children of this world* do theirs. Too plainly do the foregoing instances evince the contrary, and abundance more might be still said to make it plainer: did I not confine my self to the parable, and were it not high time to hasten,

Secondly, To examine from what causes it can possibly come to pass, that the *children*

*Ser. 9.* *dren of this world* should act with more  
 ~~~~~  
 prudence, in relation to the things of this
 world, *than the children of light* do, in
 relation to those of the other. And here
 be pleas'd to consider,

First, The advantages which, in some
 respects, the things of this world have of
 those of the other : I do not mean absolute
 advantages, such as, all circumstances con-
 sider'd, will be judg'd by a wise man to
 be; for alas! there are none such; but
 such, as men, who consider things but par-
 tially, are apt to esteem advantages, and
 to be led away by, as such. Of this na-
 ture are the actual presence and visibility
 of the things of this world, while those of
 the other are absent and invisible. Which,
 though if impartially consider'd, ought not
 to make us give preference to the things
 of this world (because of the infinitely
 larger extent, and eternally longer dura-
 tion, of those of the other, which do abun-
 dantly make amends for, and indeed vast-
 ly overbalance, the disadvantages of their
 absence and invisibility) yet, we find by
 experience, too often do. Our senses are
 generally too hard for our reason and our
 faith: and such fools are we, that, for a
 small

small sum paid down in present, we care Ser. 9.
not what we part with in reversion. We 
pretend most of us to believe the certainty
of a future state, but, I fear many of us,
with great wavering and doubtfulness. But
the things, which we see and feel, we are
sure of: and the impressions of these are
strong and lively upon our minds; while
those of the other are faint and languid.
Besides even those, who do heartily be-
lieve a future state, yet, for this very rea-
son, because it is future and invisible, are
apt to forget it, and put off the thoughts
of it, from time to time: whereas pre-
sent and sensible things are sure to be re-
membred, and, calling constantly upon us
for present care, are too apt to engross all,
and cheat the future. So that, where men
do not carefully attend to, and often even
force themselves upon a serious contem-
plation of, the future and invisible things of
another life (and how small is the number
of those men, that do this?) it cannot
possibly be otherwise, but that these fu-
ture and invisible things will have too lit-
tle of their care, and the present and sensi-
ble ones, of this world, too much. But,

Secondly,

Ser. 9. *Secondly*, As there is something in the nature of the things of this world, which seems to many men to give them a preference to those of the other: so there is something within our selves, which inclines us to those rather than these. Ever since the fall, our affections are become earthy: and we inherit a curse, not unlike that of the Serpent's, of *creeping on the ground, and eating the dust*. We easily, too easily, take delight in being busy'd about the affairs of this life: but, if our minds offer to give the word of command, and call us forth to the business of the other: then we presently find *a law in our members, warring against the law of our minds, and bringing us into captivity to the law of sin, which is in our members*. If we steer one way, we are sure of having the full wind and tide of our natural affections along with us; if the other, we are as sure to want both. And therefore the greatest part of mankind, loving their ease, and being afraid of difficulties, rather than they will be at the toil of stemming the tide, suffer themselves to be driven by it. Rather than they will be at the pains of climbing up a steep and craggy rock, tho' it

Rom. 7.
23.

it be to heaven, they will lazily roll easily down hill, though it be to hell. To speak without a figure, what men love most, they undoubtedly prosecute best: and for this reason often is it, that their conduct, in respect of heaven, is so awkward and foolish; in respect of the World, so artful and prudent. Ser. 9.

Thirdly, Another reason of this is, because the *children of this world* aim but at one main end, *viz.* the good things of this world: while the *children of light* aim at two, and two such, as are as different and contrary in their natures one to the other, as light and darkness, *viz.* the *world* and *heaven* too. When a man has but one thing to do, and unites all his faculties and powers for the doing of it, his work cannot fail of going on, easily and successfully: but when he is divided, in his opinions, interests and affections, between two objects, and gives half of himself one way, and half another, it can hardly possibly be otherwise, but that he will make but very lame work on't.

Especially if, as in the case before us, he aims at ends directly different and contrary the one to the other; like a man that

Ser. 9. is to look before and behind him, almost
 ~~~~~ at the same instant, he will look neither  
 way to any good purpose. Thus will it  
 be, at the best, if we are indifferent as to  
 our ends, and equally inclin'd and dispos'd  
 to both. But, if we once come to lean a  
 little more to one than the other, that will  
 by degrees gain us quite over to its side,  
 and nothing, but the name of aiming at  
 two ends, will remain. We may at first  
 propose to our selves to *serve God and*  
*Mammon too*, but this, our blessed Saviour  
 himself tells us, we shall find impossible in  
 Matt. 6. practice: we shall soon *hate the one and*  
 24. *love the other*, soon *hold to the one and*  
*despise the other*. And which of the two,  
*God or Mammon*, the *world or heaven*,  
 we find in experience, ofteneft prevails, I  
 am asham'd to say.

But now the *children of this world*, not  
 being distracted with different and rival  
 ends, but having only one main end in  
 view, find it an easy matter to keep close  
 to that, and to lay and execute wise de-  
 signs, for the attainment of it.

*Lastly*, The *fashion* of this wicked  
 world, in which we live, is another great  
 cause of this. The general example and  
 custom,

custom, approbation and applause, of the Ser. 9.  
 world, are apt to have abundantly too  
 great an influence upon us: to draw us in-  
 to a conformity with them in things, in  
 which we should by no means conform:  
 and to keep us from dissenting from them  
 in things, in which we ought in all reason  
 and duty to dissent. So that, while men  
 attend to these, so much as they generally  
 do, it is no wonder at all, that their con-  
 duct, in regard to the things of this world,  
 should be so much more prudent and com-  
 mendable, than in regard to the things of  
 the other: For who knows not, that the  
 wisdom in fashion is altogether that of this  
 world? This is *array'd in gorgeous appa-  
 rel*, and men bow down to it, and wor-  
 ship it, and call whatsoever it dictates *the  
 voice of God*. When, on the contrary,  
 the wisdom, which, really *is from above*,  
 is *mock'd and derided*, and, like its blessed  
 Master, *revil'd and spit upon*. While  
 therefore men strive to be fashionable, they  
 must necessarily be wise for *earth*, and not  
 for *heaven*; while they value the *praise  
 of men* more than the *praise of God*, as  
 they too commonly do, they will not be  
*half so good servants of God*, if at all his



Ser. 9. servants, as they will be servants of the  
 world.

These, if not all, yet are some of the principal causes of the imprudent management of the *children of light*, in relation to their affairs, if compar'd with that of the *children of this world*, in relation to theirs. But, lest the *children of this world* should grow conceited, upon this comparison: and, because our Saviour has pronounc'd them *wise in their generation*, fancy themselves wise indeed; I proceed,

*Thirdly*, To shew, that, altho' they are *wiser in their generation than the children of light*, yet still they are very far from being absolutely and truly wise. And this will evidently appear from considering, that they are egregiously deficient in the very first and main point of wisdom, which is, the choice of their end, the settling of the mark which they are to shoot at. For, as he can never be said to be a truly wise man, who doth not choose a good end: so neither can he, who doth not prefer a better to a worse, and, for his ultimate and supreme end, fix upon the very greatest good, which he knows himself to be capable of. And consequently,  
 he

he who doth not choose heaven before the world, the *certain, solid, ever-satisfying* and *everlasting* pleasures of that, before the *uncertain, empty, unsatisfying* and *short-liv'd* pleasures of this : but takes up with the world, as his supreme and ultimate end : has made but a foolish choice, and can never, by any after-conduct, deserve the name of a wise man. Nay, the *wiser* he proves afterwards *in his generation*, the more care and pains he takes to prosecute this his ill-chosen end, the more foolish still he really grows : because, by this means, he engageth himself still deeper and deeper in that, which he ought, if possible, to extricate himself from : he pursueth folly closer and closer, and consequently flies from true wisdom farther and farther.

So that, at the best, the *children of this world* are but *wise fools*, and that, methinks, is but a very sorry character. They very artificially indeed pursue shadows instead of substances : very industriously lay out themselves upon things, which, as the scripture elegantly expresseth it, *are not*, are all *froth* and *vanity* : and very inge-Prov. 23. niously neglect those things, which, not<sup>s</sup>.

294 *Worldly Men wiser, in their Way,*

Ser. 5. only truly *are*, are solid and substantial goods, but shall alone continue to be to all eternity. But God forbid, either that any of us should become wise, or any of them longer remain so, at this rate. Rather let us, who call our selves *children of the light*, walk as *children of the light*, with *life* and *immortality* always in our view: and let them on the contrary, who have fancy'd themselves wise, because they have been acknowledg'd to be *wise in their generation*, become *fools*, that so they may be truly *wise*; fools for *earth*, that they may be wise for *heaven*: fools for a *time*, that they may be wise for *eternity*. For the more effectual exhorting of both to which, I shall now,

*Ephes.* 5.  
8.

*2 Tim.* 1.  
10.

*1 Cor.* 4.  
10.

*Lastly*, Conclude all, with a few words of exhortation, both to the *children of this world*, and the *children of light*. And,

*First*, For the *children of this world*: is it not a thousand pities, that all their exact skill, care and industry, should be thrown away and lost, upon the trifling and perishing things of this world, when, if rightly applied, they might obtain for them an *inestimable*, and *never fading*,  
*substance*

*substance in heaven?* Oh! how would they themselves laugh at those poor silly wretches, whom they should see taking as much pains to get lead or brass, as, if wisely directed, would, with the same ease, bring in gold? And how much more do they deserve (I will not say to be laugh'd at, for the neglect of heaven is no laughing matter, but) to be pity'd and bemoaned, who foolishly lavish away that care and pains, upon emptiness and vanity, which would serve for the attainment of such joys, *as eye never saw, ear never heard*, and such as are too big for the heart of man to conceive? Nay, I will go yet farther, who, with half the care and pains, that they take for *earth*, might obtain *heaven*. For, though the business of religion is at first somewhat difficult; yet, when once we have conquer'd the beginning, the way after is all smooth: it is all a way of continu'd pleasantness. Whereas the business of this world is ever loading us with new burdens, and the more what we call the good things of it encrease upon us, the more do our cravings and appetites, our cares, fears and griefs generally increase too.

296 *Worldly Men wiser, in their Way,*

Ser. 9. For shame then look up, thou world-  
 ling, and ly no longer groveling on this for-  
 did earth. Think, seriously with thy self,  
 what a *deceitful, treacherous, base, empty*  
 cloud of happiness, thou now grasp'st at,  
 and instantly *turn thy back* upon it, and  
 scornfully *bid adieu* to it. Again, think  
 with thy self, what an *exceeding and e-*  
*ternal weight of glory* thy good God has  
 made the *high prize of thy calling*, and  
 immediately *gird up thy loins*, and endea-  
 vour *so to run*, that thou may'st *obtain*.  
 And this thou need'st not fear doing with  
 ease, if thou art but willing: since thou  
 hast been long exercis'd and train'd up to  
 care and thoughtfulness, and much more  
 hard labour, than thou wilt need here.

But, mistake me not; I do not mean,  
 that thou shouldst take no care at all about  
 the things of this world; for undoubtedly  
 God, who has plac'd us in it, and made us  
 to stand so much in need of the things of  
 it, has given us leave, in a proper way  
 and time, to provide, use, and rejoice in  
 them. All that I desire is, that you would  
 not make this world your ultimate end, but  
 turn your thoughts from it, as such, and  
 fix them upon that, which alone can de-  
 serve



serve to be so, the *happiness of the saints* Ser. 9.  
in heaven.

And, blessed God! what a glorious exchange will this be for you? What inexpressible comforts will you feel in your mind, when you shall see *heaven* at the end of *all* your labours? When your hopes of *perishing* riches, shall be turn'd into hopes of a treasure that can *never corrupt* or *fade away*; and your hopes of the trifling honours of this world, into hopes of ever-shining crowns and scepters, ever glorious principalities and kingdoms. In one word, when for false pleasures you shall have true ones, for light ones weighty, for one drop of those whole rivers of these.

*Secondly*, As to the *children of light*; what a grievous *reproach* and *disparagement* is it to them, that, when they have so truly *noble* and *excellent* an end, as they have, in view, they should either wholly neglect the prosecution of it, or, at least, prosecute it with great *coldness* and *indifference*? They cannot but know, that one of the first rules of wisdom is, to *proportion* our *concern* and *care* for things, to the *merits* of the things themselves, and their *usefulness* to us. Again, they cannot

298 *Worldly Men wiser, in their Way,*

Ser. 9. not but know that *heaven*, as it is in it  
 self more *valuable*, so it is to us more *ad-  
 vantagious* and *desirable*, than all the  
 things of this world *put together*. And  
 why then, in God's name, do they *trifle*  
 here, where they ought to be so much in  
*earnest*? why are they so frugal of their  
*care* and *pains* for those things, which of  
 all others infinitely *best*, I had almost said  
 which *alone*, deserve them?

Oh! let us not be wise *in part* any long-  
 er: but, as we have *begun* and *aim'd* wise-  
 ly, so let us *go on*, like *wise men*, to use  
 our utmost endeavours for the *attainment*  
 of that end, which we have so *wisely* aim'd  
 at. And, that *present* and *sensible* things  
 may not divert us from these *wise* endea-  
 vours, let us be sure to think often on the  
*certainty* and *eternity* of a future state:  
 how *infallible* foundations it stands upon,  
 even our own *nature*, *reason*, and the *word*  
*of God*, who cannot lie; and by *these* con-  
 siderations, let us make it always present  
 with us; how *much more*, by reason of the  
*eternal* duration and the inconceivably vast  
 extent of its happiness or misery, it stands  
 us in stead to provide for that, than for  
 the *trifling* things of this *perishing* life,  
 and

and let us proportion our cares accordingly. Ser. 9.

Again, Let us consider seriously with our selves, what a mean and scandalous thing it is to be said of us, that our *deprav'd* and *irregular affections* should get the better of our *reason* and our *faith*; and let us forthwith set our selves with all our might, to *cultivate, improve* and *strengthen* these, that so they may, as they ought to do, *correct, subdue*, and entirely *keep under* those.

Once more; let us be no longer *wavering* and *doubtful* in our minds, *dividing* ourselves betwixt *earth* and *heaven*; but let heaven, which deserves, have us all; that is, principally and before every other thing. Here is our *treasure*; here therefore let our *hearts* be. Then will the business of *religion* go on *cheerfully*, the *salvation* of our souls *securely*.

*Lastly*, Let us often call to mind, what a vile and wretchedly wicked world we live in, and how ill therefore it will become us to be *conform'd* to it, and besides how solemnly we have all promis'd the contrary. Let us dare to be singular, in order to be happy. Let us dare to keep on in  
our

Ser. 9. our way towards *heaven*, tho' we cannot  
 ~~~~~ meet with so much as one to bear us com-  
 pany in it. Nay, tho' men should *revile* us,
 and *persecute* us, and *say all manner of evil*
 against us, upon this account; yet still let
 us take heart, and manfully go on, always
 remembring who it is that has said to such,
Matt. 5. Great is your reward in heaven. And,
11. yet a little while, and he that shall come
Heb. 10. will come, and his reward is with him.
31-
Rev. 22.





S E R M O N X.

Preach'd before the QUEEN
in Passion-week 1702, at
St. James's.

Christ, once offer'd, the Christians
All-sufficient Sacrifice.

HEBREWS ix. 26. the latter part of
the verse.

*But now once, in the end of the world,
hath he appear'd to put away sin,
by the sacrifice of himself.*



HIS epistle being written to
the *Jewish* converts to chris-
tianity, who, as appears from
the frequent cautions given c. 3. 12.
c. 6. v. 4,
5, 6.
in it against relapsing and a-
postasy, and the manifold exhortation to
constancy

Ser. 10. constancy and perseverance, were in some
 danger of revolting from their christian
 profession to the law of *Moses* : the author
 of it spends the greatest part of it, in re-
 presenting to them the excellency and ad-
 vantages of the christian dispensation, above
 the *Mosaical* ; as the properest argument
 which he could possibly use, to keep them
 from hankering any more after the law,
 and to make them firm and immoveable,
 in their adherence to the gospel. With
 this topick he begins his *epistle*, and close-
 ly pursueth it, throughout his ten first
 chapters ; proving by uncontroulable autho-
 rities, taken from the *law*, the *psalms* and
 the *prophets* of the *Jews* themselves, the
 perfection of the gospel above that of the
 law ; and this, not in one or two, but in
 every respect. For as *Jesus Christ*, the
Mediator of the new covenant in the gos-
 pel, was, both in his own *nature*, and
 likewise upon account of those offices and
 honours, with which God invested him, a
 much more excellent person than *Moses*, or
 even than the angels, by whom the *law*
 was spoken ; so the covenant of the gospel
 it self was a much better covenant, than
 that of the law, tending *more to perfection*
 founded

c. 10. 25,

26, 27, 28.

c. 29. 38.

c. 3. 13.

c. 4. 14.

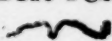
c. 10. 23.

35.

c. 1, 2, 3.

c. 7. 19.

8. 6.

founded upon *better promises*, and bring-
ing in a better hope; its *priesthood* of a 
more noble order, *royal, immortal, un-*
changeable, establish'd upon the oath of
God, which the *Levitical*, that is the *Jew-*
ish, *priesthood* was not, and the privileges
belonging to it such, as theirs never enjoy'd
or could hope for, which was for the high
priest to enter, *once for all*, into the *true*
holy of holies, the *highest heavens*, there
to *sit down for ever at the right hand of*
God, and to *save to the uttermost all them*
that come to God by him: its high priest
so qualified, as the *Jews* could never boast
of any one amongst theirs, *holy, harmless,*
undefil'd, separate from sinners, and there-
fore not needing, as theirs did, first to make
atonement for his own sins, before he could
be fit to make atonement for those of the
people; its *tabernacle* a *greater and more*
perfect tabernacle, even the *heavenly sanc-*
tuary it self, of which the *Jewish* taber-
nacle was but a very faint and imperfect
type and shadow; and *lastly*, its *sacrifice*
a much more *valuable* and *efficacious* sa-
crifice; not the *blood of goats* and of *calves*,
but of *Christ himself*; not *sanctifying on-*
ly to the purifying of the flesh, but *pur-*
ging

Ser. 10.

c. 7. 11.

14, 16, 20.

21, 24, 28.

c. 9. 24.

7. 25.

c. 7. 26.

27, 28.

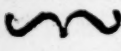
c. 9. 17.

c. 8. 5.

10. 1.

c. 9. 12.

13, 14, 15.

Ser. 10. *ging our consciences from dead works, to*
 *serve the living God, and obtaining eter-*
nal redemption for us ; not oftentimes of-
fer'd, and yet never able to take away sins,
 C. 10. I. *but, by one offering perfecting for ever*
 14. *them that are sanctified.*

And these three very great and eminent advantages and perfections of the *christian Sacrifice*, above those of the *Jews*, or indeed any other whatsoever, I shall beg leave to make the subject of my following discourse; they being all compriz'd in the words of my text, which plainly assert these three things.

First, That the christians sacrifice is *Christ* himself; for so we are told, that *he*, that is *Christ*, appear'd to put away sin, by the *sacrifice of himself*.

Secondly, That this sacrifice was a full and effectual expiation, or atonement for our sins; as is imply'd in those words, to put away sin.

Lastly, That this sacrifice was offer'd once for all, and is to be no more repeated; but now *once* hath he appeared to put away sin.

And, in treating of each of these particulars, I shall first prove the truth of it,
 and

and then its advantageousness to us christians. Ser. 10.

First, That the christians sacrifice is *Christ* himself; by which I mean, that *Christ*, in his *death upon the cross*, became a true and proper *expiatory sacrifice*; for the sins of all such, as should believe in him: I say in his *death upon the cross*, because the *Socinians* pretend, that the expiation which he made for sin, was made in *heaven*, and not upon *earth*; whereas the words of my text plainly refer to what he did here on earth. He appear'd or was made manifest, say they; where? on earth, no doubt, *to put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself*. And accordingly we find, that the *remission of our sins*, and *reconciliation of us to God*, are constantly attributed in scripture to *Christ's death*, and his *blood-shed on the cross*, as the immediate effect of them; and he is expressly there said to have *obtain'd eternal redemption for us*, before he enter'd into the *holy place*, that is, *heaven*. And certainly, he never look'd so like an expiatory sacrifice, any where, as there, where he *bare our sins in his own body*, where he *shed his blood for the remission of them*;

Crel. cont.
Grot. c. 10.
partic. 53.

Eph. 2. 16.
Colos. 1.
22.

Heb. 9. 12.
1 Pet. 2.

24.
Matt. 26.

28.
Colos. 1.
20.

Ser. 10. and made peace for us, that is, on his
 ~~~~~ cross.

If then our Saviour was a true and proper expiatory sacrifice, he was undoubtedly so upon his cross. And, that he was to be, and actually was, such a one, seems to me to be so plain and certain a truth ; so clearly foretold, as part of the character of the *Messiah*, in the Old Testament ; and so fully and constantly affirm'd of our *Jesus* in the New ; and withal giving us such a noble and becoming account of the death and passion of Christ, so highly for the honour of God and our Saviour himself, that I am amaz'd to think that any, who pretend to believe the scriptures, and to be lovers of rational and consistent schemes of things, can prevail upon themselves to entertain the least doubt about this matter.

v. Ough-  
 tram de  
 sacrificiis,  
 p. 18. 209,  
 210, 211,  
 212.

As to the Old Testament ; besides that it were easy to prove, were it needful, that all the expiatory sacrifices, under the law, were but types and shadows of that grand and substantial expiation, which the *Christ* or *Messiah* was to make, by the sacrifice of himself : besides that there are several expressions in its prophecies, which seem evidently to mark out the *Messiah* for



for an expiatory sacrifice, (as, that he should bear our griefs, and carry our sorrows; that he should be wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; that the chastisement of our peace should be upon him, and that by his stripes we should be heal'd; that God should lay upon us the iniquities of us all; that he should be brought as a lamb to the slaughter; that he should be cut out of the land of the living, and stricken for the transgression of his people; and that he should bear the iniquities of many; texts, which the ancient Jews, who liv'd before our Saviour's time, and were unprejudic'd, did generally acknowledge to relate to the Messiah.) Besides all this, I say, and the prophet *Daniel's* intimation to this purpose, that *the Messiah should be cut off, but not for himself*; we are told in express words, that his, the *Messiah's* soul, himself or his life, *should be made an offering for sin*. And what can the offering of his life for sin mean, but his becoming an expiatory sacrifice for sin?

And then in the New Testament, we not only find *St. John the Baptist* bespeaking our Saviour for an expiatory sacrifice, in

*Bp. Pearson on the Creed, p. 87.*

*Dan 9 26.*

# 308 Christ, once offer'd, the Christians

Ser. 10. those words of his, *Behold the Lamb of*  
*God that taketh away the sins of the*  
*world*; words which plainly allude to the

*Lev* 1. 10. *lamb*s which were slain for *expiation* of  
 5. 6 *sins* under the law; but we likewise find  
 him called a sacrifice, a *sacrifice for sin*,  
 set in opposition to the expiatory sacrifices  
 of the *Jews*, and his blood to their blood;

*Eph.* 5. 2. and therefore prov'd to be a proper high-  
 priest, whose office chiefly consisted in of-

*Heb.* 10. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12. fering *gifts* and *sacrifices* for sin, because  
 he offered *himself* a sacrifice for sin. More-

over we there find all the qualities and pro-  
*Heb.* 9. 12. perties of a true expiatory sacrifice attri-

buted to him. As that he was substituted  
 28.

*1 Tim.* 2. 6. in the room of *offenders*, to bear the pu-  
 nishment of their sins; he was to *give his*  
 v. Ough- *life a ransom for, or instead of, many*; nay  
 tram de *life a ransom for, or instead of, many*; nay  
 sacrifice.

1. 2. c. 6. he *did give it a ransom for all*, *λύτρον* and  
 Sect. 4, 5. *ἀντίλυτρον*, the proper words to signify an

expiatory sacrifice; he was *made sin*, and  
 21. *a curse for us*; he *suffer'd for the unjust*,

Gal. 3. 13. he *died for the ungodly*, he *was offer'd*  
*to bear the sins of many*, he *tasted death*  
*for every man*, that so he might *deliver*

*us from the fear of it*. That he did vo-  
*luntarily* offer his life to God, for the ex-  
*piation* of sin: *No one took away his life*  
 from

from him, but he laid it down of himself: Ser. 1. c. he gave it an offering, and a sacrifice to <sup>Heb. 9. 28.</sup> God, for a sweet smelling savour: he saw <sup>2. 9. 14.</sup> that God had no pleasure in those sacri- <sup>15.</sup> fices, and offerings, and burnt offerings, <sup>Job. 10.</sup> and offerings for sin, which were offer'd <sup>18.</sup> by the law; and, of his own accord, he cry'd out, *Lo I come to do thy will, O God, by offering my body once for all.* And lastly, That God was consenting to all this, <sup>Heb. 10. 8.</sup> and that it had the effect of taking away <sup>9. 19.</sup> sin, or the punishment of it, as expiatory sacrifices us'd to have: God himself pre- <sup>Heb. 10. 5.</sup> par'd him a body for this purpose: he de- <sup>Rom. 8. 32.</sup> liver'd him up for us all: he sent him to <sup>1. Job. 4.</sup> be the propitiation for our sins; he made <sup>10.</sup> him sin for us: he gave him this com- <sup>2. Cor. 5.</sup> mandment to lay down his life: and <sup>21.</sup> therefore did he love him, because he laid <sup>Job. 10.</sup> it down. And, by this death of his, we <sup>17, 18.</sup> are said to have remission of sins, and to <sup>Rom. 3.</sup> be reconcil'd to God. <sup>25.</sup> <sup>Colos. 1.</sup> <sup>21, 22.</sup>

Add to this, that this account which the scriptures give us, of the end and occasion of Christ's taking our nature upon him, and humbling himself to death, even the death upon the cross, viz. that it was upon an agreement between him and his Fa-

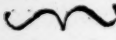
310 *Christ, once offer'd, the Christians*

Ser. 12. ther, in this way *to make an atonement*  
 ~~~~~ *for the sins of the whole world*, is truly  
 great and noble, worthy the Son of God,
 and God himself ; and therefore giveth full
 satisfaction to our minds, as to this point
 Whereas, setting aside this account, we
 shall be hard put to't to find any other ac-
 count of this wonderful dispensation, that
 will be at all satisfactory. For this, I take
 it for granted, no body will deny me ; that
 it is not to be conceiv'd, that the Son of
 God should be deliver'd up to death, but
 for the obtaining of some end of the high-
 est moment and importance ; and that too
 such an end, as could not well, at least not
 near so well, be any other way obtain'd.
 And such an end I take the *procuring of*
pardon for the sins of the whole world to
 be ; one of the greatest and noblest ends,
 for which God and his Son could concern
 themselves ; and withal, such an end, as,
 we cannot apprehend, could have been ob-
 tain'd in any other way, so consistent with
 the infinite majesty, holiness and justice of
 God, with the honour and authority of his
 laws, and with his fix'd decree to have sin
 discourag'd to the utmost for the future,
 as this of the *sacrifice of his well-beloved*
 Son

Son is. But we must not pretend to say Ser. 10.
the same of those two other ends, which
the *Socinians* assign of *Christ's* death, viz.
That he might be an example of patience,
and that he might confirm the truth of
God's promises; and therefore we cannot
acquiesce in these alone, tho' we can fully
in the other, as giving us a rational and
becoming account of the end and occasion
of *Christ's* passion and death.

And, blessed God! what a glorious and
comfortable consideration must this needs
be to us christians, that we have all the
assurance that can be desir'd, that *Christ*
himself is our sacrifice. *Christ*, I say, who,
as the author of this epistle describes him,
having made the worlds, and upholding Heb. 1.
all things by the word of his power, and
being ador'd by all the angels of God, by
the commandment of God himself, and
being the brightness of God's glory, and
the express image of his person, must ne-
cessarily be God; and yet having taken
upon him the seed of *Abraham*, and been
made partaker of flesh and blood, must c. 2.
be as surely man too as he is God; and
being both God and man, was perfectly
well qualified, to become a sufficient and

312 *Christ, once offer'd, the Christians*

Ser. 10. satisfactory sacrifice to God, for the *sins*
 *of the whole world.* For his humanity
H. b. 9. 22. made him capable of *shedding his blood*
 for our redemption, without which God
 had ordain'd that there should be no *re-*
mission of sins, and moreover of suffering
 for us, in the very same nature that had
 sinn'd, which was most agreeable to justice
 and equity ; and his *divinity* gave such an
 infinite value to his sufferings, as made
 him such a sacrifice, as a God of infinite
 majesty, justice and holiness, might secure-
 ly accept of, in full satisfaction for all our
 sins, without any the least derogation from
 his honour and authority, without any the
 least jealousy of encouraging sin, and a
 contempt or neglect of his laws for the
 future. Oh ! into how much better a con-
 dition are we christians put, by having such
 a sacrifice to trust to, as, we are sure, was
 capable of offering to God full satisfaction
 for our sins, than either the *Heathens*
 or *Jews*, who had nothing better than the
blood of beasts to place their confidence in ;
 which, being not of the same nature with
 that which sinn'd, could not, even accord-
 ing to the opinions of the *Heathens* them-
 selves, make atonement to God for sinners:
 and

v Annot.
 in Orig.
 cont. Cels.
 p. 23.

and which moreover, bearing no manner Ser. 10.
of proportion to the guilt of sin, and the dishonour done to God by it, nor being any way sufficient to make reparation to God, for *past sins*, and to discourage sin for the *future*, could not possibly, as the scripture it self tells us, *take away sins*? *Heb. 10.*
More especially, how much better will⁴ our condition appear to be than theirs? when we come to consider,

Secondly, That this *sacrifice* was a full and effectual expiation, or atonement, for our sins; that is, that it did fully satisfy God's justice, and appease his wrath against us upon the account of our sins, remove the punishment of them, set us perfectly right in his sight, and render him entirely reconcil'd and propitious to us. For it is not enough, that we have a sacrifice capable of doing all this for us, unless we can be assur'd likewise, that God has accepted it to such full purpose and effect; it being undoubtedly purely at his free will and pleasure, whether he would accept of any person to suffer in our stead, or no, though never so capable; and also to determine, how far the sufferings of such a person should be available, for the atonement
of

Ser. 10. of our sins. Nor yet is it enough to have
 ~~~~~ prov'd in general, that God did accept of  
 our Saviour for an expiatory sacrifice, and  
 that, as such, he did in some sense *take*  
*away sin* : for so did the expiatory sacrific-  
 es among the *Jews*, which yet, we are  
 sure, did not *wholly* and *fully take* it *away* :  
 but we must prove moreover, that God  
 did accept of our *Saviour's* sacrifice, in  
 full and entire satisfaction for our sins.

And it seems to be, at least, a very good  
 presumptive proof of this, that *God him-*  
*self*, who was consenting to, and concern'd  
 in, this whole business of our *Saviour's*  
 offering himself a sacrifice for our sins, and  
 who never doth any thing in vain, did  
 take care that such a sacrifice should be  
 offer'd to him, as was capable of making  
 such a full and entire satisfaction. Be-  
 sides, it doth not seem consistent with God's  
 honour to suppose, that *he* should *send his*  
*Son*, to do a work *imperfectly* or by *halves* :  
 or that he should not so far respect his  
 sacrifice, as to allow all that efficacy to it,  
 which it was capable of. Farther, the  
 scripture speaks very plainly and home, as  
 to this point. My text tells us, that  
 Christ came to *put away sin*, or, as the  
 words

words may be translated, for the *frustra*-Ser. 10.  
*ting* and *disannulling* of sin, so as to ren-  
 der it of no manner of *force* or *power* a-  
 gainst us. \ Thus we find the word us'd in <sup>Eis d'Situ</sup>  
 this very *epistle*, *there is verily a disan-*<sup>σιν ἀμαρ-</sup>  
*nulling* (the same word with that in my <sup>ηias.</sup>  
 text) and abrogation or utter abolition of  
 the force and power, *of the command-* Heb. 7. 18.  
*ment going before.* And so, in heathen  
 authors, the word is us'd to signify an *ut-*  
*ter abrogation* of laws, so as quite to  
*extinguish* and *make void* the whole force  
 and obligation of them; a *frustrating* and <sup>Mark 7. 9.</sup>  
*bringing to nothing*, as it is translated like- <sup>Gal. 2. 21.</sup>  
 wise, in *other* places of scripture. \ And <sup>Luk. 7. 30.</sup>  
 we are frequently assur'd, that *God has* <sup>19.</sup>  
*reconcil'd us to himself by the death of his* <sup>Coloss. 1.</sup>  
*Son*, that we have remission of sins in his <sup>21, 22.</sup>  
*blood*, that his blood cleanseth us from all <sup>Rom. 3.</sup>  
*sin*, that by him we are justify'd from all <sup>25.</sup>  
*things*, from which we could not be justi- <sup>1 Joh. 1. 7.</sup>  
 fy'd by the law of Moses, that in him, <sup>Acts 13.</sup>  
 God hath forgiven all our trespasses, and,  
 to name no more, that by one offering <sup>Coloss. 2.</sup>  
 Christ hath perfected for ever them that <sup>13.</sup>  
 are sanctify'd. Texts, to our unspeakable <sup>Heb. 10.</sup>  
 comfort, as clear and full to our pre- <sup>14.</sup>  
 sent purpose, as our own hearts can wish.

And

### 316 *Christ, once offer'd, the Christians*

Ser. 10. And indeed, when we seriously consider  
 ~~~~~ that God not only *releas'd* Christ, who  
 was our *surety*, from the hands of that
 death, which he underwent, as the *punish-*
ment of our sins ; but moreover, immedi-
 ately after his resurrection, shew'd all pos-
 sible *favour* and *honour* to him ; *giving*
him all power, both in heaven and in
earth; exalting him to the right hand of
the majesty on high, and there making
him sit down, far above all principality,
and power, and might, and dominion, and
all this too, for this very reason, because
he by himself purg'd our sins : when we
 consider all these things together, we shall
 find great reason to infer with the *Apostle*,
that there is now no condemnation to them
that are in Christ Jesus, and that no one
 shall *lay any thing to the charge of God's*
elect ; but that all those blessed prophe-
 cies, relating to the times of the *Messiah*,
 are now *amply* fulfill'd, *viz.* that *trans-*
gression should be finish'd, sin made an end
of, reconciliation made for iniquity, and
everlasting righteousness brought in : and
 that God would *forgive the iniquity of*
 his people, and *remember their sin no*
more.

Add

Add to this, that the ceasing of sacrifice-Ser. 10.
ces, under the christian dispensation, under which *there remains no more sacrifice for* Heb. 10.
sin, is a manifest proof that sin is already^{26.}
aton'd for by the sacrifice of Christ. For,
to turn the argument of the author of the
Epistle to the *Hebrews*, where remission
of sins is, there is no more offering for 10. 18.
sin; where there is no more offering for
sin, there, say we, is remission, full and
entire remission, of sins.

And *this*, this is the christian's confidence and rejoicing of hope, that he knows Heb. 3. 6.
himself to be accepted in the beloved: in Ephes. 1.
whom he hath redemption through his^{6, 7.}
blood, the forgiveness of sins. This is a
most illustrious and incomparable advantage, that the christian sacrifice has over
the Jewish, that, while that can sanctify
only to the purifying of the flesh, that is,
can only give an outward legal cleanness,
by which men may be qualify'd for external communion, with the congregation of
God's people, and save from civil punishments and temporal death: this can purge Heb. 9. 12,
our consciences, our very souls themselves,^{13, 14.}
from dead works, from the guilt of such
sinful works, as death was due to, and obtain
tain

318 Christ, once offer'd, the Christians

Ser. 10. tain eternal redemption for us. And yet,
 as great as this advantage is, it is not all.
 Heb. 9. 15. For,

Thirdly and lastly, This sacrifice was
 offer'd once for all, and is to be no more
 repeated. For so my text tells us, that
 now once Christ hath appear'd to take a-
 way sin: and other places of scripture,
 Heb. 9. 28. that he was once offer'd to bear the sins
 12. of many, that by his own blood he entred
 once into the holy place, that he hath
 1 Pet. 3. 18. once suffer'd for sin, and that there re-
 maineth no more sacrifice for it. And
 we have a very good reason given us for
 Heb. 10. this, viz. because, by one offering, Christ
 26. hath perfected for ever them that are
 sanctify'd, and we are sanctify'd through
 the offering of the body of Jesus Christ,
 10. once for all; so that there is no farther
 18. need of any offering for sin. Under the
 Jewish law indeed, where the sacrifices
 could not make them, for whom they were
 offer'd, perfect, nor take away sins: the
 1. 11. Priests were forc'd to stand daily mini-
 string, and offering oftentimes the same
 sacrifice, and to offer them year by year
 continually. But such is the efficacy, such
 the excellency of the christian's one single
 sacrifice,

sacrifice, that, after our *high-priest* had Ser. 10.
once offer'd that, he sat down for ever on Heb. 10.
the right hand of God; from thenceforth 12, 13.
expecting till his enemies be made his foot-
stool.

\ What then, perhaps, some men will say,
is one main end of repeating sacrifices, un-
der the *Jewish* dispensation, which was,
to keep up in mens minds an habitual and
constant sense and dread of the guilt and
punishment of sin, quite forgotten and lost
under the christian? as it seems to be, if
there be no provision there made, for the
repetition of sacrifices. I answer, no: it
is so far from being forgotten and lost, that
it is abundantly better provided for, by
Christ's institution of his *holy supper*, in
commemoration of his having once been
offer'd a *bloody sacrifice* for sin; a bare re-
membrance of which must needs be much
more effectual, for the keeping alive in
our minds a quick and terrifying sense of
the guilt and punishment of sin, than the
seeing ten thousand beasts sacrific'd for it,
could possibly be. So that we need not
the church of *Rome* to help us out in this
point, by saying for us, that the sacrifice Can. Con.
of the *mass* is a *true expiatory sacrifice*, Trid. Sess.
and 22. c. 2.
can. 3. 1.

Ser. 10. and again, that *it is not only a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, or a bare commemoration of the sacrifice finish'd on the cross, but a propitiatory sacrifice, a true and proper sacrifice offer'd to God.* A doctrine, so directly contrary to scripture, and so highly derogating from the merits of our Saviour's sacrifice, the infinite value of which might surely well make one oblation of it sufficient; that we should have reason to wonder at any council, for requiring the belief of it, under pain of an anathema; any council, I say, but that, which had before shew'd it self forsaken of common sense, when it establish'd the doctrine of *transubstantiation*.

Seff. 13.
c. 4.

And this is no small advantage to us christians, that, by Christ's offering of himself *once for all*, we are set free from the expence, care and trouble of providing more sacrifices: all which were very heavy upon the *Jews*, and made *their yoke* to be *such, as neither they nor their fathers were able to bear*. Certainly in this, as well as in all other respects, our blessed Lord has fully made good his words to us.

Acts 15.
10.

Matt. 11.
30.

That *his yoke is easy, and his burden is light*. But the greatest advantage of all

is,

is, that hereby we have *full assurance of* Ser. 10.
faith, that *God will remember our sins* Heb. 10.
and iniquities no more, and that we, be- 17, 22.
ing once purg'd by the blood of Jesus, 2.
have no more conscience of sins, no more
inward dread of the guilt or punishment
due to them: but are *perfected for ever*, 14.
have a full atonement made for all our sins,
past and to come, by this one offering, if
we take care to be sanctify'd, to fulfil the
conditions, upon which it is offer'd, for
the atonement of our sins. And this is
such a blessed assurance, as no other sacri-
fice, but that of the Son of God, could
possibly give.

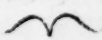
And thus, I hope, I have sufficiently
prov'd and confirm'd the truth of that doc-
trine, which my text proposeth to us, and
our *holy church* most *religiously* maintains,
viz. that Christ, by his one oblation of
himself, once offer'd upon the cross, made
there a full, perfect and sufficient sacri-
fice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins
of the whole world; and likewise have
very evidently shew'd the vast and inex-
pressible *advantage* of this to us *christi-*
ans. If I may presume upon your pati-
ence a little longer, I will very briefly put

322 *Christ, oncc offer'd, the Christians*

Ser. 10. you in mind of several important duties,
 ~~~~~ that are naturally to be infer'd from this  
 doctrine. And,

*Joh. 3. 16. Coloss. 1. 22, 21, 22.* First, *If God so lov'd the world, as to give his only begotten son to die for us, that so he might reconcile us to himself, by his death, through the blood of his cross: us, who had been alienated from, and enemies to, him, by wicked works; most certainly this consideration ought to affect us with a most deep and lasting sense of God's unspeakable love and goodness towards us: and to engage and excite us, in all possible ways, to acknowledge and return this love. By magnifying God's name for it, both in publick and private: by making it the great business of our lives, so to serve, obey and please him, that we may become truly qualify'd for the blessed effects of it: nay, and by denying our selves, taking up our Saviour's cross, and most willingly becoming obedient unto death, for his sake, whenever he shall think fit to call us to it.*

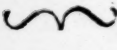
Again, this great and wonderful expression of *God's love to us*, should encourage us, in all our wants and difficulties, to draw near to God with humble confidence, and  
 to

to ask of him, and depend upon him for, Ser. 1.  
a supply of, and release from, them: for,   
as St. Paul argues, *He that spar'd not* Rom. 2.  
*his own Son, but deliver'd him up for us* 32.  
*all, how shall he not with him also freely*  
*give us all things?*

Once more, If God has so lov'd us, how  
ought we to love one another? If he, who 1<sup>st</sup> Job. 4. 9.  
lay under no manner of obligation to seek 10, 11.  
and to save us, when we had, through  
our own folly, gone astray and lost our  
selves: did nevertheless, out of infinite com-  
passion and goodness, send his son to be  
a propitiation for our sins, that we  
through him might live: how ready  
ought we to be, who lye under manifold  
obligations to promote each others good,  
to assist and befriend each other, to the  
utmost? More especially how ready should  
we always be, to do any thing for the  
good of one anothers souls? How careful  
to imitate the divine goodness, in using our  
best endeavours, to prevent any from  
perishing, and to bring all to repen- 2<sup>nd</sup> Pet. 3. 9.  
tance; considering one another, to pro-  
voke unto love and to good works?

Nay farther, if God commended his Heb. 10.  
love to us, in that when we were enemies, 24.  
he reconcil'd us to himself, by the death Rom. 8.  
10.

# 324 *Christ, once offer'd, the Christians*

Ser. 10. *of his son*; how ought this to teach us,  to *forgive, love and pray* for our enemies,

Luk. 6. 35. that so we may approve our selves *true children of the most high*, who doth good

Matt. 5. 45. good to the *just and unjust*, and is kind *even to the unthankful and the evil*.

Phil. 2. 5. 6, 7, 8. *Secondly*, Did Christ, when he was in the form of God, and equal with God,

make himself of no reputation, and take upon him the form of a servant, and humble himself, and become obedient to death,

1 Pet. 3. 18. *even the death of the cross*, that so he might bring us to God? Let this mind,

then, be in us, which was also in Christ Jesus. Let us never think our selves too great to do good, too high to look down upon our brethren. Oh no! the lower we stoop to do good, the higher do we really rise: the nearer we follow our *blessed Lord*, in his *charitable abasement* of himself here, the nearer shall we one day be plac'd to him, in his *glory* hereafter.

*Thirdly*, Is sin of such an heinous and malignant nature, and so very odious in the sight of God, that nothing less than the *blood of the son of God*, could make a full and sufficient satisfaction and expiation for it? What an utter abhorrence and detestation

tion

tion of sin ought this consideration to be-Ser. 10.  
get, and imprint deeply on our minds?   
For certainly if God *bruise'd* and *put to shame* <sup>Isai. 53.</sup>  
*grief*, in the most terrible manner, his *only* <sup>10.</sup>  
*begotten Son*, when standing in the place  
of sinners: there can nothing remain for  
us, if we *continue wilfully in our sins*,  
but *a certain fearful looking for of judg-* <sup>H. b. 10.</sup>  
*ment, and fiery indignation, which shall* <sup>26, 27.</sup>  
*devour us.*

And this consideration of the odious and  
provoking nature of sin, in God's sight, and  
the certain evil consequences that will at-  
tend and punish it, ought likewise to influ-  
ence us in our politick capacities, as mem-  
bers of one common body, and make us all,  
in our respective stations, most exactly di-  
ligent and careful, to discourage and sup-  
press vice: as the best way, which we can  
possibly take, to shew our love to our  
country, and to ward off all manner of ills  
and mischiefs from it.

*Fourthly*, Has the sacrifice of Christ  
*taken away the curse of sin, which was*  
*everlasting death*? What reason can there  
then be, for our standing any longer in *fear*  
*of death*? Ought we not rather to cry out,  
in triumph over it, with St. Paul, *O death,* <sup>1 Cor. 15.</sup>  
*where* <sup>55, 56, 57.</sup>

326 *Christ, once offer'd, the Christians*

Ser. 12. *where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Fifthly*, Doth there remain *no more sacrifice for sin*? then it stands us in great stead, to take heed to the utmost of sinning beyond what this sacrifice will atone for; that is, indeed, to take heed of sinning at all. For, since the merits of this sacrifice will be available for none, but such, as repent of their sins, become obedient, and are sanctify'd, in this life: and since all men, who give up themselves to a course of sinning, nay, even those who wilfully commit but a single sin, run a manifold hazard, whether they shall repent or no: it is plain that every sin, much more every habit of sin, puts us in danger of sinning, beyond what the merits of this sacrifice will atone for. More especially ought we to be careful, that we do not dye in an impenitent state. For, whatever the church of *Rome* may talk of sacrifices *for the dead*, we have no ground from scripture to trust in any such.

*Lastly,*



*Lastly*, Since the sacrifice of Christ is Ser. 10.  
of such *vast advantages* to all christians,  
and procureth for them so many and such  
*inestimable benefits*; hence we may learn,  
what great reason christians have, at all  
times, to contemplate and remember this  
sacrifice: but more particularly, when they  
partake of that holy feast, which our Lord  
himself purposely instituted for the com-  
memoration of it. With what eager joy  
and delight ought we to embrace all op-  
portunities, but more particularly the  
*great and solemn* one now approaching, of  
remembring how *dearly* the *Son of God*  
has *loved us*, even *unto death*, and how  
beneficial, unspeakably beneficial, this his  
love has been to us? With what desire  
ought we to desire to be frequent in the  
commemoration of that sacrifice, which  
has *taken away sin, overcome death, ob-*  
*tain'd eternal redemption*, and set open  
the gate of *everlasting life*, for us?

And oh! that every one of us may so  
effectually remember it, as evermore to  
hate and avoid sin, which was the occasi-  
on of it: so effectually, as *above all things*  
to love *him*, who willingly became this  
sacrifice for us: in one word, so effectually,

Ser. 1C. as to live ever hereafter like those, who  
are *bought with a price*, even the inestimable price of the *blood of the son of God*:  
1 Cor. 6. and are *therefore bound to glorify God*,  
20. *with their bodies and spirits, which are his.*





## S E R M O N XI.

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Preach'd before the QUEEN  
*November 1703, at St.  
James's.*

---

The desirableness of dying a right-  
eous Man's Death.

---

N U M B E R S xxiii. 10. the latter part  
of the verse.

*Let me dye the death of the righteous,  
and let my last end be like his.*



H A T *Balaam*, whose words  
these are, precisely meant  
by them, and whether, as  
some learned men suppose, <sup>Grot. in</sup>  
he had respect in them only <sup>loc.</sup>  
to the temporal promises of the *Jewish*  
law,

Ser. II. law, by which good men seem to have been secur'd against violent and untimely deaths, is not very material here to enquire. It is enough for my present purpose, that that Holy Spirit, by which *Balaam* spake, may be very reasonably presum'd to have had a much larger and nobler prospect, a much higher meaning and intention in them; and that, according to the natural and unforc'd sense of the words themselves, *to die the death of the righteous*, must signify to die exactly in the same circumstances and condition, in respect of death consider'd purely as death, in which a righteous man dieth; and to have our *last end like his* must either signify the same thing with *dying his death* (death being frequently call'd in scripture man's last or latter end;) or else it may farther denote our undergoing the same sentence at the day of judgment, and having the same lot and portion that he shall (the word, which we here translate *last end*, signifying sometimes the final issue and event, the ultimate result and upshot of things, as also the wages and rewards of them.) But it is needless to contend which of these senses shall take place, since in reality and effect they are

are both the same, and do virtually and Ser. II.  
 implicitly comprehend each other. For he, and none but he, who *dieth a righteous man's death*, shall have a righteous man's judgment, and be partaker in a righteous man's rewards.

The entire sense then of this wish may be briefly summ'd up in these following words. O may it so happen to me, that when I come to die, I may both in the hour of my death, and in whatever is to come after it, fare just so as the righteous man shall.

The words thus explain'd, offer me a fair opportunity of enquiring,

*First*, Why it is such a desirable thing to *die a righteous man's death*.

*Secondly*, How they ought to live who expect and desire so to die; and,

*Lastly*, Of earnestly exhorting you all to use your utmost endeavours, so to live, that ye may not fail of so dying.

*First*, Why it is such a desirable thing to *die a righteous man's death*; and for this the scriptures have given us abundance of very plain and convincing reasons, *viz.* because the *end of that man is peace*; he <sup>Ps. 37. 37.</sup> *bath hope in his death*; to him to die is <sup>Prov. 14.</sup> *gain*; <sup>32.</sup>



Ser. 1. gain; 'tis to be present with the Lord, to  
 be with him in paradise, to be comforted  
 in Abraham's bosom, &c. that is, in other  
 words, to be immediately admitted into a  
 very great and glorious state of happiness,  
 and, if not the very greatest of all (which  
 probably shall not be entered upon, till af-  
 ter the general judgment) yet a sure and  
 infallible pledge of that, a state only infe-  
 rior to that. Death, which we are all apt  
 to be so much afraid of, and which to the  
 unrighteous man is indeed a *king of terrors*,  
 is to the righteous man not terrible at all.  
 But, under what notion soever we consi-  
 der it (whether as it is our leaving this  
 present world, as it is a separation of our  
 souls from our bodies, or as it is our en-  
 trance upon a new and unchangeable state  
 of things) it can never come too soon, or  
 be an unacceptable and unwelcome guest  
 to such an one.

*First*, Let us consider it, as it is our  
 leaving this present world, a place so dear  
 to the generality of mankind, that they  
 think it impossible they can ever make too  
 much of it, or cling too fast to it. A place,  
 which they cannot bear so much as the  
 thoughts of leaving, without the utmost re-  
 gret

gret and reluctance imaginable, much less Ser. II.  
can actually take their leaves of, without be-  
coming all over amazement, horror and  
distracti<sup>o</sup>n. A place, which they must be  
even violently forc'd and torn from, a-  
gainst all their strongest inclinations and  
affections; or, which, if they do seem to  
give up at last, it is only because they can-  
not help it, and find it in vain to struggle  
for it any longer.

But, blessed be God, the case is quite  
otherwise with the righteous man; he has  
been taught and convinc'd, from the very  
beginning of his life, at least of his spiri-  
tual life, that he was not to expect here  
an *abiding city*, but to look upon himself  
as a *pilgrim* and a *stranger*; liable to be  
summon'd hence to his Father's house in a  
far distant country, at an hour when per-  
haps he may not think of it; nay, it may  
be *in a moment, in the twinkling of an*  
*eye*, without so much as the least warning,  
in the midst of his health, and in the flow-  
er of his age.

And accordingly he has made it his  
great care not to *set his affections upon*  
*this world or the things of it*, but to wean  
and take them off from them, as much as  
possibly

Ser. II. possibly he could ; to live above them, and  
 ~~~~~ to sit loose to them ; to use the world indeed, but not to abuse it, *knowing that the fashion of it passeth away.*

He has been mindful likewise of *setting his house in order*, and disposing his worldly affairs so, that they may not trouble him when he cometh to die. He has, with infinite satisfaction, repos'd every thing that is most dear to him here, in the arms of God's wise and good providence, and *cast all his care* upon one, who, he is sure, *careth for him.* And, as for that spiritual work, which God had given him to do here, he has long since made that his chief concern and business. He has been careful to *work in the day*, well knowing that *the night would come, when no man can work* ; he has *finish'd his course*, he has *kept the faith* ; his *loins are girded about*, and his *lights burning* ; and he himself is as one waiting for his summons out of this world, in which, if God so thinks fit, he has nothing more to do.

Besides, he has all along liv'd under a right notion and apprehension of this present world ; as of a place, where a man
 may

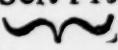
may be sure that he shall meet with a great Ser. II.
deal of solid and substantial trouble, but little, very little, true and real pleasure; a place, full of snares and temptations for good men, where they are always in danger, without the utmost caution, of making ship-wreck of their virtue and *hope of salvation*, and where consequently they have been forc'd to converse, with much fear, jealousy, reservedness, restraint and uneasiness; a place, where not improbably he has been ill us'd, and persecuted for his *righteousness sake*; at least, where he has been put to it to make his way, with much difficulty, thro' the oppositions and contradictions of sinners; and where, by dwelling amongst such, he has had his *righteous soul vex'd from day to day*, with *seeing and hearing their unlawful deeds*.

But above all; he is possess'd with a firm and unshaken belief, that whenever he shall be taken out of this world, he shall be translated into another infinitely more happy and desirable: that death shall not put an end to his being, or deprive him of all his pleasures and enjoyments; but that it shall only change them for such as are unspeakably

Ser. II. speakably better ; and that he shall have a rich amends made him in the life to come, for those few valuable things, such as good friends, relations, &c. which he has been forc'd to leave behind him in this world.

And what now can any man see in this character of the righteous man, that should incline him to believe that his departure out of this world will be in the least terrible or uneasy to him ? surely it is much more reasonable to conclude from it, that such an one will, as it is express'd in the book of *Job*, *rejoice exceedingly, and be glad when he can find the grave* ; when he can have leave to retire from this sink of sin and misery, and to gain a peaceful and secure retreat within those blessed regions, where all his cares, all his fears, and all his dangers shall cease together : where his time of trial and probation shall be happily over, the *high prize* of his *calling* secur'd, beyond all danger of losing it again, and his rewards already begun, in a very glorious, tho' improving, state of pure and endless felicity.

Secondly, Let us consider death, as it is a separation of our souls and bodies ; two dear companions, you'll say, that have
long

long liv'd together in so close and intimate Ser. II.
 an union, that for this fifty or threescore 
 years or more, perhaps, they have never
 been so much as one moment absent from
 each other. And must these part at last?
 certainly this must needs be a very sad
 and melancholy parting. A sad parting,
 no doubt, to them who have wholly, or
 chiefly, given themselves up to bodily plea-
 sures, and liv'd altogether a life of flesh
 and sense, and never had any true relish
 of a rational, spiritual and divine life: and
 who consequently, when they *put off their*
bodies, must necessarily put off all hopes
 of happiness with them. But by no means
 sad to a righteous man, who has made it
 his constant business to keep under his bo-
 dy, and to bring it into subjection, to live
 abstractedly and spiritually, and to *have*
his conversation in heaven; and who, by
 so doing, has fitted and prepar'd himself
 for that pure and spiritual life, which he
 knew he must enter upon, as soon as ever
 he should be stripp'd of his body. Nay,
 so far from sad to him, to whom his bo-
 dy has been all along a troublesome and
 ungovernable subject, a mighty clog and
 hindrance to all the affairs of his soul, a

Ser. II. perfect prison and restraint to it, and
 the cause of innumerable temptations,
 pains, difficulties and disorders; that it is
 utterly inconceivable to reason, that he
 should not be very well pleas'd to be re-
 leas'd from it: to be set free at once from
 all these evils and uneasinesses, and to be
 put into a full and perfect liberty of pur-
 suing the natural aims and desires of his
 soul, without any, the least, let or inter-
 ruption for evermore. Besides, even in
 mere kindness to his body, he cannot but
 be willing to part with it; because he
 knows assuredly that his parting with it
 for a little while, will be for its infinite
 gain and advantage; and that, after a
 short time, he shall receive it again for
 ever, so spiritualiz'd and refin'd above what
 it was, that it shall never more be any
 trouble or incumbrance to him. He lays
 it down in a sure and certain hope of its
 resurrection to life again, when, tho' it was
 1 Cor. 15. *sown in corruption, it shall be rais'd in
 incorruption; tho' it was sown in disho-
 nour, it shall be rais'd in glory; tho' it
 was sown in weakness, it shall be rais'd
 in power; tho' it was sown a natural
 body, it shall be rais'd a spiritual body;*
 tho'

tho' it was once *mortal*, it shall now have *Ser. II.*
put on immortality. ~~~~~

Lastly, if we consider death, as it is our entrance upon a new and unchangeable state of things, we shall be so far from finding it unacceptable to a righteous man, upon this account; that, to use the apostle's words, this is his *hope*, his *joy*, his *crown of rejoicing*. He can easily acquiesce and be contented, under the other two notions of death; but in this he perfectly exults and triumphs; nay, it is this which mainly supports and comforts him under the two. And who indeed can forbear triumphing over death, that knows it to be to him only a *short dark passage* into *everlasting glory*? that knows it to be the *gate of paradise*, tho' a little *strait* and *narrow*, and difficult to pass thro'; and the entrance into such joys, as *eye never saw, ear never heard, and such as* Rev. 7.
16, 17.
21. 4. *are too big for the heart of man to conceive*? Oh blessed place! where all tears shall be *wip'd from our eyes*, where there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: where we shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the

Z 2

sun

Ser. II. *sun light on us, nor any heat* (nothing which may be in the least troublesome or inconvenient to us) but we shall partake of a *fulness of joy*, and of *rivers of pleasure at God's right hand for evermore*. Blessed God! who would not gladly exchange this world, even tho' it were much more desirable than it is, for such a *transcendently happy* state as this? Who would not rather part with ten thousand bodies, if he had them, than be excluded from this glorious and blisful place, into which *flesh and blood cannot enter*? Oh! who can possibly fear death, with such an heaven as this at the end of it? Who would not even long and desire to die away into *everlasting life*?

But here perhaps some men will be apt to say, that it is an easy matter to make harangues, and say fine things, in the *theory*, of the righteous man's *fearlessness* and *contempt of death*; but how doth this matter really stand in fact? Doth our experience convince us that good men, when they come to die, are so perfectly indifferent and unconcern'd, so full of peace, and hope, and joy, as we have represented them? Or rather, doth it not convince us,
that

that many that pass with us for good men, Ser. II. seem to be as timorous and apprehensive of death, and to hanker after, and be as fond of life as other men? And what account can we be able to give of this; or how can we make it consistent with what has been already said upon this head? To this I answer,

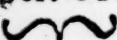
First, That the very highest things, which I have any where said in this discourse of the righteous man's fearlessness and contempt of death, and of his peace and hope, and joy in it, have been many times actually exemplify'd in the deaths of good men. Witness that *noble army of martyrs*, who more cheerfully resign'd their lives, than their judges and executioners could take them from them; who, in the midst of their health and strength, and all other circumstances that might make life desirable, voluntarily offer'd themselves to death, nay, even courted it, and fought for it, as an high privilege and peculiar happiness; and who, in the midst of the most lingering, painful and tormenting kinds of death, held out with the most undaunted courage and resolution, and at last expir'd, in smiles, in hymns of thanks

Ser. II. and praise to God, in raptures and extasies. And, lest this should be thought a very extraordinary case : witness all those many pious souls within our own knowledge (more especially within ours who are ministers of the gospel, and whose business it is to attend upon sick and dying persons) who have declared to us, both in word and deed, upon their death beds, their entire willingness to leave this present world, and the inexpressible joy and comfort which they felt in the hope and prospect of a better. And, if this be not always the case with those that appear to us to be righteous, there are, doubtless, very good reasons to be assign'd for it, which will not in the least derogate from that power, which I have attributed to righteousness, of arming us against the fears of death, nay, and even making it easy and comfortable to us. As,

First, That we are often mistaken in our accounts of men, and take those for righteous, who, upon a very slight observation, outwardly appear to us to be so, who yet perhaps are guilty of such secret sins, as make them know themselves to be far otherwise. And then it is no wonder,

der, if these men, when they come to die, Ser. 11.
are very much disturb'd and uneasy, upon account of those sins, which, tho' hidden from the eyes of all others, are so very legible to their own consciences. And this must needs appear very odd and strange to us, while we are ignorant of the true cause of it, but answers itself, as soon as ever rightly understood.

Secondly, That among those who really are, generally speaking, good men, there are but few, very few, that are so good as they should be. But few that do what they can and ought, to *take off their affections from this world*, to make up their accounts with it, and prepare themselves for their departure out of it. But few that lead lives pretty much abstracted from flesh and sense, and use their utmost endeavours to give their minds the most deep and lasting impressions, which they are able, of the future and invisible things of another world. And, this being so, it cannot possibly be otherwise, but that they must sometimes be surpriz'd and disorder'd by death; but then this is apparently their own fault, and not any deficiency in righteousness or religion, whose

Ser. II. rules had they but strictly followed, as  they might and ought to have done, they would not be, upon their death-beds, in that hurry and confusion, that concern and trouble, in which they too often find themselves. And this consideration should make us all, even the very best of us, extremely careful to think of, and live under a constant and habitual preparation for death, in the time of our health and strength; that so we may be always ready, at what time soever our Lord shall call us, and have little else to do, than to resign our souls into the hands of God, as into the hands of a most faithful Creator.

Thirdly, This very often happens from *bodily melancholy*, which is apt to make good men think a great deal worse of their spiritual state and condition, than they really deserve, and so to fill them with unreasonable and groundless fears, jealousies and suspicions concerning them; or else from the distempers which bring them to their death-beds, which frequently so dispirit and enfeeble them, that they seem to have lost all manner of heart and courage, and to be even troubled and uneasy:
and

and these, which are only natural indispo- Ser. II.
sitions, some men are very willing to mis-
construe moral ones ; or it may be from
their concern for their poor families, who
are like to lose their main, if not only,
humane stay and support in them, and to
be put to very great straits and difficulties,
when they are gone ; or lastly, from the im-
pressions which, at such a time more espe-
cially, the grief of their dearest friends
and relations, which is so plainly to be
heard and seen all about them, is apt to
make upon them (a cruel and unreason-
able kindness this, in our friends, I must
observe by the way, however well meant,
thus to discompose our thoughts, and di-
vide our affections, which ought now whol-
ly to be *heaven-wards* : thus to *catch* at
us, and *hold us fast*, when we must of
necessity be going : and, by so doing, to
make this last tug and conflict of nature,
in which, God knows, they ought much
rather to assist than hinder us, still more
and more difficult.) But the same answer
will serve to all these, *viz.* either that these
are accidental circumstances, not necessari-
ly belonging to death, as death, and so do
not fall within our present consideration :
or,

Ser. II. or, that, so far as they are necessary, they take advantage of the weaknesses and infirmities of good men, and make them seem to own such a fear of death, as they themselves, in a sound state of mind, would utterly detest and abhor.

Lastly, After we have said all that we can, there is such a natural aversion in men to *death*, resulting from that *intimate union*, which is between our *souls* and *bodies*, as it will be extremely difficult to suppress and conquer so far: that there shall appear no manner of regret or reluctance, even in good men, when they come to dye. Nature will struggle to the last, even whether we will or no; and this struggle of hers may look something like an unwillingness in good men to dye, when it really is not so; as is plain from the declarations of good men themselves, who, under all this struggle and conflict of nature, do frequently profess an entire *willingness to be dissolv'd*, and, as far as such a troublesome conflict will permit, give proof of the sincerity of these their professions, by all the outward expressions of *contentment*, *joy* and *satisfaction*, that can in reason be expected. Even *St. Paul* himself, who *earnestly desir'd*

sir'd to be dissolv'd and to be with Christ; Ser. 11.
yet was so apprehensive of some sort of trouble, that he must undergo in *putting off his body*, that he wish'd that he were not to be *uncloth'd, but cloth'd upon, 2 Cor. 5. with that house which is from heaven.*⁴

Nay, and in our *blessed Lord* himself, at the near approach of his death (which yet we are sure he was perfectly resolv'd upon, satisfy'd in, and pleas'd with) his humane nature seem'd to shrink and draw back a little, and made him pray to his father, that, *if it were possible, that cup might* *Mat. 26. pass from him.* Two plain proofs that³⁹

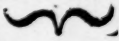
we must not judge good men to be fearful and unwilling to dye, only because we see some sort of struggling and reluctancy in them, as death draws near: these being very often the pure effects of nature, and by no means signs of the inward sense and desires of their souls.

The sum of all then is this: either that what men are apt to think a fearfulness and unwillingness in good men to dye, is not really so; or that, if it be, yet that it is not upon account of death, consider'd purely as death, but upon account of some peculiar unhappy outward circumstances, that attend

Ser. II. attend it, and help to make it more terrible, than, in it self, it would be: or else, that it proceeds from *bodily distempers and infirmities*: or lastly, that it is owing to a want of that due strictness and exact care of our lives, which religion requires at our hands. And that, to whatever other cause it may be imputed, it can never be imputed to any *want of power in righteousness or religion*, to arm us against these fears, and to make us *more than conquerors* over this king of terrors.

I proceed to enquire,

Secondly, How those men ought to live, who expect and desire to *dye a righteous man's death*; and the answer to this is very plain and short, that they must live a *righteous man's life*. That they must live *soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world, and keep a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man*; and especially that they must frequently exercise themselves in those duties, which have a more immediate tendency to fit and prepare them for *death*, such as *self-denial, mortification, retirement, heavenly-mindedness, prayer, reading good books, &c.* And that no other way but this will do

do is evident, because all the joys and Ser. II.
comforts of a righteous man upon his 
death-bed, and all his happiness after
death, are the natural and judicial effects
and consequences of his good life. *Peace*,
as the prophet *Isaiah* well observes, *is the* *Isaiah 32.*
*work of righteousness, and the effect of it*¹⁷.
quietness and assurance for ever. Be-
cause the righteous man hath accustom'd
himself to despise this world, to live above
it, and to be a stranger to it; therefore can
he, with great ease, part with it. Be-
cause he has understood the worth and ex-
cellency of the soul, above that of the bo-
dy, and has led a spiritual life, and has
chiefly delighted in and valu'd spiritual plea-
sures; therefore can he put off his body,
without any great unwillingness, and go
with joy and comfort into the *world of*
spirits. Lastly, because he hath made it
his constant care to behave himself so, up-
on all accounts, as he knew would render
him most *acceptable to God*, and intitle
him to the *blessings of another life*, pro-
mis'd by his son Jesus Christ, in the gos-
pel; therefore can he enter upon this new
life, with the greatest cheerfulness and
alacrity

Ser. II. alacrity imaginable, with joy *unspeakable and full of glory.*

And, for the same reason, because the wicked man has all along plac'd his utmost hope and happiness in this world and the things of it; therefore can he not ever be willing to leave it, but must be even forc'd and torn, with violence, from it. Because he has accusom'd himself to relish none but bodily pleasures, and has never had any right taste or apprehension of spiritual ones; therefore will he dread the thoughts of being stripp'd of his beloved body, and becoming all spirit, that is, according to his notions of things, all misery. Once more, because he has liv'd so as to have provok'd God, and to have drawn upon himself all the miseries of that future state, threaten'd against sinners in the gospel; therefore must he necessarily dread the entering into this future state: this state to him, of certain and everlasting woe and torment.

As well then may we expect to *gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles*, as the *comforts and blessings* of a righteous man's death, from an *unrighteous* man's life. No, the natures of all things, nay,
even

even of God himself, must be first chang'd; Ser. II.
the promises and threatnings of the gos-
pel must be quite alter'd, and made di-
rectly contrary to what they now are;
causes must produce effects, not only not
like themselves, but the most different and
unlike that possibly can be. Contradictions
must be all reconcil'd, absurdities all vanish;
light must become *darkness*, and *heaven*
hell, before this can possibly come to pass.

I deny not but that an *unrighteous life*
may possibly *end well* and *comfortably* at
the last, in an happy repentance; I mean
such a repentance, as has been begun some
considerable time, before our death, and
has given us, by its repeated *good fruits*,
reasonable hopes and assurances of its ha-
ving been sincere, and having wrought a
thorough change and amendment in us.
But as for a death-bed repentance (what-
ever uncovenanted mercy God may have
in store for it, which, though we shall not
take upon us to limit, yet we are sure it
cannot become sinners to presume upon:
or however we may be forc'd sometimes
to advise men to it, as the best thing
which they can do, when they have brought
themselves to this miserable shift) yet thus
much

Ser. II. much we may safely say of it, that it cannot possibly give us the *peace* and *hope* and *joy* of a *righteous* man's *death*; and that, for two very substantial reasons, both because we cannot be sure that a death-bed repentance shall be accepted of God, although it be sincere: and because, tho' we were sure of this, yet it is impossible for us, in this world, to be sure of the sincerity of it.

O let us then all make haste to repent, in our health and strength, while there are hopes, that we may live to see the habitual effects of our repentance, by which alone we can be able to judge of its sincerity, and consequently its availableness. And, if we are not so happy as to be of the number of those *righteous* persons who *need no repentance*; yet at least let us be of the number of those happy *penitents*, who *turn to the Lord, while he may be found*, and who, finding him, shall find in him every thing that their souls can thirst after or long for. But this belongs properly to

My *third* and *last* head, under which I am to exhort all men to use their utmost endeavours so to live, that they may not fail

fail of *dying a righteous man's death.* Ser. II.

And for this purpose, I have but just time to put you in mind, that you cannot live with any tolerable ease and contentment even in this world, nor enjoy the pleasures of it, such as they are, to the best advantage, without having first taken care of this. For the fear of death is a most *slavish fear*, and will all our lives long *keep us in bondage*, will mingle with and embitter all our pleasures, take off the edge, and spoil the relish of all our enjoyments. That the way to live long, is to live so, that we may not fear death; it being the fear of this which inflames and heightens all our distempers, and very often kills us, when they would not. That, when we come to dye, we shall stand in the utmost need of all the joys and comforts of religion to support our faint and drooping spirits: that we shall then be willing to purchase them, at any rate, whereas they are now easy to be had: and, oh dreadful reflection! that they will not then be to be *purchas'd*, even though we were able to give the *whole world* for them. And that, after death (supposing that we should repent upon our *death-beds*) it is highly improbable that

Ser. II. our repentance will avail us any thing;
 ~~~~~ and, if not, we must be utterly lost and  
 Deut. 32. undone for ever, *Oh that men were wise,*  
 29. *that they would think upon these things,*  
*that they would consider their latter end.*

And so most men will be apt to tell us that they do; and that, though they are at present engag'd in the *ways of sin*, yet they fully design to *draw off* in time, to find a *place for repentance*, and so to bring all right at last. And truly I am very apt to believe, that most wicked men do so design. But what reason then, in God's name, can they give, why they should *de-lay* so much as *one moment*, to put this *wise* and *important* design in execution? Why they should not make *all the haste*, that possibly they can, to give themselves the unspeakable comfort and satisfaction of living without the fear of death? Why they should leave this most grand and momentous of all concernments, to innumerable hazards and uncertainties, and not instantly secure it? Oh! how much wiser can they be, in matters of infinitely lesser value, how seldom do they act thus, in their worldly affairs?

I shall conclude all with the advice of Ser. 11.  
the son of Sirach— *Humble thy self* Eccles. 18.  
*before thou be sick, and in the time of* 21, 22.  
*sins, shew repentance. Let nothing hin-* 14. 13, 14.  
*der thee to pay thy vow in due time, and* 5. 7.  
*defer not till death, to be justify'd. Do* 14. 12.  
*good before thou die, and according to thy*  
*ability, stretch forth thy hand. Defraud*  
*not thy self of the good day, let not the*  
*part of a good desire over-pass thee. Make*  
*no tarrying to turn to the Lord, and put*  
*not off from day to day: for suddenly shall*  
*the wrath of the Lord come forth, and in*  
*thy security thou shalt be destroy'd, and*  
*perish in the day of vengeance. Remem-*  
*ber that death will not be long in coming,*  
*and that the covenant of the grave has*  
*not been shew'd unto thee.*

God grant that we may seriously lay  
these things to heart, and learn to  
live every day, more and more to his  
glory, and our own eternal salvati-  
on, through Jesus Christ our Lord.



## S E R M O N XII.

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Preach'd before the QUEEN,  
in *Lent* 1704. at St. *James's*.

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A good Conscience a Pledge of fu-  
ture Happiness.

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I JOHN iii. 12.

*Beloved, if our heart condemn us not,  
then have we confidence towards  
God.*



T the 18th and 19th verses of  
this chapter, we find the apo-  
stle recommending to chri-  
stians a sincere and effectual  
love of their brethren, not in  
*word and in tongue only, but in deed and*  
in



*in truth*, from this following consideration. Ser. 12.  
on, viz. that such a love as this would be one sure mark and proof of their being true christians, and, provided they should be deficient in no other part of their duty, would give them an humble trust and confidence of their being in a state of grace and favour with God. *Hereby*, saith the apostle, that is, by this love, *we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure*, or rather persuade, *our hearts* or consciences *before God*. And, in order to make this appear to be, as indeed it is, a consideration of the highest moment and importance, and which consequently ought to have a most powerful influence upon us; he immediately adds, that such an *assurance* or *persuasion* of our consciences, as this, would be a comfortable and hopeful *pledge* and *earnest* of a *favourable sentence* from God, at the *day of judgment*. For, as on the one hand, *if our heart condemn us*, we have all the reason in the world to fear, that *God will condemn us too* (because, as the apostle observes, *God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things*: he knoweth us much better than we do our selves: and those faults for

Ser. 12. which we condemn our selves, and many  
 ~~~~~ others as bad or worse, which may proba-  
 bly enough have escap'd us, cannot possi-
 bly be hid from his all-seeing eye) so, on
 the other hand, *if our heart condemn us*
not, then have we confidence towards God,
 that he will not condemn us neither.

Thus much for the relation which these words have to the context ; let us now come to consider them in themselves, more closely. And indeed there is very great reason so to do : since, what through the unreasonable scrupulosity of some, and the high conceitedness and presumption of others, there is hardly any one part of these words, but what has been grievously wrested and misunderstood. Nay, and which is yet infinitely worse, the very end and design of the apostle in them has been utterly defeated and perverted ; and, instead of being, as he no doubt intended them, an encouragement to all manner of virtue and goodness, they have too too often been made, on the direct contrary, a covert and excuse for all manner of sin and wickedness. To prevent all which, as far as we are able, for the future : we must beg of you seriously to attend to the following

lowing particulars, in which, we hope, you Ser. 12.
will find the true sense and full meaning
of these words.

First, That these words are not to be understood absolutely: as if every man, whose conscience doth not *fly in his face*, and tell him, even *without asking*, that he is in a *state of condemnation*, may have *confidence towards God*. For it is notorious to all the world, that there are a great many vile and profligate sinners, whose consciences (being unnaturally stupify'd and lull'd asleep, by the power of drink and lust, and a constant heat and hurry of sinning: or being judicially fear'd and harden'd by God: or, at least, being perfectly neglected, and, not only never consulted, but even not so much as hearken'd to, when they would speak of themselves) do not condemn them, or perhaps not appear to them so to do, who yet, we are very sure, cannot possibly have any, the least, ground of *confidence towards God*. And therefore we must necessarily take these words with some restraint, with some such limitation as this: that if, after a full and impartial trial and examination of our selves, our consciences shall find no reason

Ser. 12. to condemn us, then we may have *confidence towards God*. That this must be the meaning of these words, seems to me very plain from the reason of the thing it self: it being impossible that any judgment, that we can make of our selves, should be right and just, and consequently such as God will ratifie and confirm, and which we may therefore have hope and confidence in, without such a previous trial and examination as this. And besides, καταγινώσκει. the word, which we here translate *condemn*, doth properly signify to condemn, after a full and fair cognizance and examination of the cause. And the scripture Galat. 6. 3, 4. plainly tells us, that we must first *prove or try our own works*, before we can have *rejoycing in our selves*; and that, if we do not this, we shall be apt to *think our selves to be something, when we are nothing*, and, by so doing, *to deceive our selves*.

Secondly, That, by our hearts or consciences condemning us not, we are not to understand that our consciences must find no manner of fault with our past lives, in any respect; in this sense there is no man living, whose conscience must not condemn him:

him: there being no man upon earth, as *Ser. 12.*
Solomon observes, *who sinneth not*, or, as *1 Kings 8.*
St. James, who doth not, through *igno- 46.*
rance or infirmity, surprize or unwari- Jam. 3. 2.
ness, offend in many things. But the main
 thing, that we are to be concern'd for, is,
 that our consciences may not have any just
 ground to accuse us of having liv'd in any
 wilful habit of sins of any kind, whether
 of *deed, word or thought*, whether of *com-*
mission or omission; nay, nor so much as
 of any single deliberate act of sin, much
 less of any very gross and enormous sins,
 which are, by many casuists, reckon'd e-
 quivalent to an whole habit of lesser sins;
 at least, that they may not be able to ac-
 cuse us of any of these unrepented of and
 unforfaken: nay, or even so lately repen-
 ted of and forfaken, that, as yet, there
 can hardly have been time enough to have
 given proof of the sincerity of our repen-
 tance, by a constant and steady series of
works meet for it. Where-ever this is re-
 ally and truly the case, there is no questi-
 on at all to be made, but that the man,
 whose case it is, is, according to the terms
 of the gospel, in a *state of salvation*: and
 consequently, whenever our consciences
 are

Ser. 12. are really perswaded, upon a full and impartial examination of our selves, that this is truly our case, this must be sufficient to give us *confidence towards God*, or *hope* that we are in a state of *grace* and *favour* with him, that is in other words, in a *state of salvation*.

Lastly, By the *confidence* here spoken of (supposing it, as I have all along done, to relate to our spiritual estate, and not merely to the *acceptance of our prayers* with God, as some would have it: of which more anon) I do by no means understand an absolute certainty, and infallible assurance of our being in a *state of salvation*, but only a good degree of hope, and of moral assurance concerning this. And my reason is, because the ground of this assurance, which is our *trial* and *examination* of our selves, is but a fallible, and in some sense, uncertain ground; it is possible we may be deceiv'd in it, and then we must necessarily be deceiv'd in the *inferences* which we make from it. And hence it is that St. *Paul* tells us, that altho' he

1 Cor. 4.
4. *knew nothing by himself*, or could find no fault with himself, yet was he *not thereby justified*; he might possibly be mistaken

mistaken in his judgment of himself, and Ser. 12, therefore did not look upon it as an absolute justification of him. However that, from a *trial* and *examination* of our selves made with due care and attention, we may have sufficient ground of *hope* that we are in a *state of grace* and *favour* with God, is plain; not only from the reason of the thing itself, which teacheth us, that this is a very probable way of coming to a right knowledge of our state and condition; but also from the words of the same apostle in other places, which assures us, that his *rejoicing was this, the testimony of his conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity he had had his conversation in the world*; and that it was his consciousness of his having fought a good fight, having finish'd his course, and having kept the faith, which made him speak with so much confidence of a crown of righteousness laid up for him. And¹ St. Peter expressly tells us, that the answer of a good conscience, its answer, as the word properly signifies, after due questioning and examination, saves us. And, as I just now observed, we are commanded to *prove our own works*, for this very reason,

Ser. 12. reason, that *thereby we may have rejoicing in our selves.*

These *particulars* being admitted, the plain sense of the apostles words will be this; that if, after a full and impartial trial and examination of our past lives, our consciences shall find reason to conclude, that we have lived so, either as righteous persons, or as penitents, as *becomes the gospel of Christ*; we may then have a good degree of hope, nay even some sort of modest *confidence* and *assurance*, that we are in a *state of salvation*.

So that the things which seem chiefly to concern us, from these words thus explain'd, are,

First, To know, when we may be said to have made such a full and impartial trial and examination of our selves, that if, upon such trial and examination our consciences do not condemn us, we may have *confidence towards God*.

Secondly, How we may be best able to make this trial and examination of our selves. And,

Lastly, To enquire a little particularly into the nature of that *confidence*, which those, who have made this trial and examination

mination of themselves, may have towards Ser. 12.
God, if their consciences do not condemn them.

First, To know when we may be said to have made such a full and impartial trial and examination of our selves, that if upon such trial and examination, our consciences do not condemn us, we may have *confidence towards God*. Now then, we may be said to have done this ; when,

First, We have done our utmost to give ourselves a clear and full knowledge of our state and condition. And,

Secondly, Have likewise taken due care to inform and instruct ourselves in a right and perfect understanding of that rule, by which our state and condition are to be tried. And,

Lastly, Have faithfully and impartially applied this rule to our state and condition, and, without any the least favour or affection, judg'd ourselves by it.

These three things, a full and clear knowledge of the cause that is to be judg'd ; as also of that rule, by which it is to be judg'd ; and an honest and unbiass'd application of this rule to our cause, are all that is requisite in order to our forming a right judgment

W Ser. 12. judgment in any cause: And, omitting any one of these, it will be impossible for us to judge right of any, even cases of the least moment. And therefore, to be sure, no one of them must be omitted by us, in the case before us, which is of such vast moment, that the consequence of our judging rightly, or otherwise, in it, may be no less than everlasting happiness or misery.

First, We must do our utmost to give ourselves a clear and full knowledge of our own state and condition. And this is no more, than what we ourselves own to be necessary in all other cases. If we go to council to have any civil doubts resolv'd: the first thing which we are careful to do, is to prepare a true state of our case; and, according as this is more or less perfect, the judgment upon it must, of necessary consequence, be more or less perfect too. For a man can make his judgment only according to what appears to him; and therefore, if all doth not appear, that should, or at least doth not appear in its true and proper light, the judgment, tho' good as to what appears, yet must needs be wrong or deficient, as to the real and intrinsic merits of the cause. And just so will it be
in

in our present case; we are to make a Ser. 12. judgment concerning our past lives: and how can we do this, without knowing what our past lives have been? Nay, we are to make a judgment so exactly true and right, that we may have reason to hope, that even that most just Judge, God himself, will confirm it; and therefore certainly the most perfect and complete knowledge of ourselves, that we can attain unto, is absolutely needful. And, till we can be sure that we have done all that is in our power towards the attaining of such a knowledge, I cannot see how we can any way satisfy our own reason, that we have done what is requisite towards a full and impartial trial and examination of ourselves.

But I would not willingly be misunderstood upon this head: When I say that we must do our utmost, to give our selves a full and clear knowledge of our state and condition, I do not mean that we are to recollect all our past thoughts, words and actions; for this is impossible; nay nor yet, that we are bound, in a more general sense, to review the whole course of our past lives; but only so much of them, as may be sufficient to give us a clear and
undoubted

Ser. 12. undoubted satisfaction, whether we are at present, and for some considerable time last past, have been, in a firm and entire disposition of mind, to serve and please God in all things, or no. This is the main point, which it concerns us to be secure of: And therefore, tho' I would by no means defraud holy souls of that unspeakable *joy* and *confirmation of hope*, which the blessed review of an whole life well-spent, and of an universal obedience, almost in every thought, word and work, must needs fill them with; yet, considering this is the case but of very few, and that, tho' it be a very desirable case, yet it is not absolutely necessary in order to our salvation; I cannot think fit to represent it as such; to the raising of scruples in weak minds, and making the work of Self-examination, which is at best hard enough, still more and more difficult and perplex'd.

Secondly, We must be careful likewise duly to inform and instruct ourselves in a right and perfect understanding of that rule, by which our state and condition are to be tried. In our secular affairs, we take care, as near as we can, to choose a man perfectly

perfectly well vers'd in the knowledge of Ser. 12.
the law, for the resolver of our law-cases. ~~~~~
And this surely with great reason; since it
is impossible for a man, who is ignorant,
tho' but in part, what the law is, to de-
termine certainly whether our case is ac-
cording to law or no. And doth not the
reason hold just the same; and ought we
not to be, at least, as prudent in our spiri-
tual affairs, as in our secular? The grand
question, which our consciences desire to be
resolv'd in, is, whether our late course of
life has been such, as we have reason to
believe God has been pleas'd with: that
is, in other words, whether it has been ac-
cording to that rule of life, which God has
given us to walk by, *viz.* the dictates of
our own nature and reason, and his writ-
ten word. And how can we possibly re-
solve this, without a thorough knowledge
and understanding of what this rule is?
I say, a thorough knowledge and under-
standing; because, if we know but *in part*,
we may perhaps be condemn'd by that
part of our rule which we do not know,
even when we are acquitted by that part
of it which we do know. It is plain then,
that an entire knowledge of the rule or law,

Ser. 12. by which we are to be judg'd, is absolutely necessary, in order to our making a just and adequate judgment of our selves; and consequently we cannot so much as hope that we have made such a judgment, till we have us'd our utmost care to acquire such a knowledge.

Lastly, Be our knowledge, both of our selves and of our rule, as perfect and compleat as we need to desire they should be; yet still, if we do not honestly and impartially apply this rule, thus thoroughly understood, to the state and condition of our lives thus faithfully represented, we may, after all, be very far from a true and just judgment of our selves. These two are indeed admirable qualifications for a judge; but what will they signify, if not sincerely and uprightly us'd: if, thro' favour or affection, thro' fear or an unwillingness to believe the truth, we put a more loose and easy construction, either upon the state of our lives, or the sense of our rule, than they will really bear? To what purpose is it, that we know right from wrong, if, after all, we may be so far corrupted and prevail'd upon, as to judge wrong to be right? Who can have any trust or dependence

dance, in the least, upon the sentence of Ser. 17. such judges? What shadow of probability is there, that God should approve and confirm their judgment?

Well then; be it agreed, that the fore-mentioned qualifications are absolutely necessary, in order to our forming such a true and just judgment of our selves, as may, if in our favour, *give us confidence towards God*; yet still the greatest difficulty is behind, and that is, to know,

Secondly, How we may be best able to make this judgment. And here it cannot be denied, but that where men have been so careless as to let their accounts run on a great while, without ever casting them up, there it must needs be a matter of great difficulty and perplexity at last to settle them. But yet, as great as this difficulty is, it might in time be surely conquer'd, if we could but once persuade men, when they are about to begin this work, to be honest and true to themselves, willing and resolv'd to know the very worst of their condition, and rather to be severe upon, than to flatter, themselves; to be serious and attentive, to allow time, and thought enough, for this great and important work;

Ser. 12. and, above all, earnestly to implore the divine direction and assistance in it. And, that they may not fail of this, I shall make it my

First instruction to them, before they set about this work, to consider seriously with themselves, how great and important a work it is, and of how fatal consequence any mistake in it may prove ; how it is all to be review'd and scann'd over again, at the strict and unerring tribunal of God himself : how little it will avail us to acquit ourselves here, unless we do it upon such sure grounds, as God shall likewise

2 Cor. 10.
18. acquit us upon hereafter, for *not he that commendeth himself is approv'd, but whom the Lord commendeth* ; and what a miserable cheat it will be upon our selves, to construe our selves better and safer than indeed we are, and, by so doing, to keep our selves from becoming so good and so safe, as we might, and ought to be. And, by these and such like considerations, to excite and quicken our caution, our attention, our diligence, our integrity, our impartiality, and our earnest desire of the assistance of God's Holy Spirit. And, thus prepar'd, we may very hopefully,

Secondly,

Secondly, Begin this trial and examination of our selves; which will best be done, by taking to our selves some summary of our christian duty, distinctly and particularly digested under proper heads, and questioning our selves, under each of these heads, how we have perform'd or neglected each duty; more especially, how we have done or omitted it of late. And the more exact and particular our summary shall be (and for this you had best advise with your spiritual teachers) so much the better; because it will be the greater help to our memories, in recollecting the account of our past lives; the more perfect, and consequently the more satisfactory rule to judge of our selves by. And let us not content ourselves with doing this once or twice only, but let us do it again and again, at different times, and in different tempers, with the utmost reflection and intentness of mind, and with an earnest desire and resolution to sift and search our lives to the very bottom. And let us be sure to take special notice, as we go along, of those heads of duty, under which we shall find our selves to have been faulty, and to put them together by

B b 3

them.

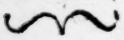
Ser. 12. themselves, as also all the circumstances
 ~~~~~ of aggravation or extenuation belonging  
 to them, as near as we can remember;  
 that so we may go over them again by  
 themselves, and endeavour thoroughly to  
 understand how our state is, in respect of  
 them.

And more particularly ought we to in-  
 sist upon those duties, which do most near-  
 ly concern us, as being proper to our sta-  
 tions and circumstances of life, and which  
 therefore we are, in a peculiar manner,  
 answerable for; as also upon such, as will  
 most plainly and directly prove us to have  
 had, all along, a sincere sense of, and re-  
 gard to, the obligations which religion  
 lays upon us; such as, private prayer and  
 meditation, secret alms-giving, doing jus-  
 tice to our own loss, and of our own ac-  
 cord, where no human power could have  
 forc'd us, &c.

And if, after such a serious, and par-  
 ticular, and often repeated examination of  
 our selves as this, we shall plainly find,  
 that we have constantly, for some time at  
 least, liv'd in the practice of the last men-  
 tion'd duties or such like, which nothing  
 but a true sense of religion could possibly  
 engage

engage us to ; and that, as to all other Ser. 12.  
duties, more particularly such as are proper to our peculiar stations and circumstances, we have not wilfully transgressed them, much less have accustom'd ourselves so to do, or at least have, sometime ago, heartily repented of these our transgressions, and walk'd more warily and uprightly ever since. If this, or the contrary, doth evidently appear ; here seems to be very good ground and authority, the best which, humanly speaking, we can have, to acquit or condemn our selves accordingly.

But if the case be doubtful, which is indeed most commonly the case of mankind, who sin and repent, and repent and sin again so very frequently, and lead such mix'd and uncertain lives ; that it is hard to determine which is the more prevailing principle in them, sin or religion. If this, I say, be the case ; it is demonstrable that we cannot come to any settled judgment about it ; because there is not any settled ground for such judgment. And therefore all that we can do in this case, is to advise these men to live more certainly and steadily for the future, to hold better to their repentance, and, by so doing, to make

Ser. 12.  it a good ground of hope concerning their spiritual condition. And then, we shall be very ready to *speake peace* to them; and their own consciences will admit them to be partakers of that *confidence towards God*, which I am now,

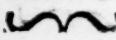
*Thirdly and lastly*, To enquire a little more particularly into the nature of. And here I desire it may be remember'd, that I before hinted that, by *confidence towards God*, some would have no more meant, than a confidence that God will hear our prayers; and that chiefly, because it follows immediately in the next verse, *And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things which are pleasing in his sight*. Now, tho' I readily grant that this may be a good argument, that this was part of the apostles meaning (tho' these words may be likewise an additional consideration by themselves, and have no relation to the confidence mention'd in the foregoing verse) yet I can, by no means, allow it to be a good argument, that this was the whole of it. On the contrary, the apostles speaking, in the preceding chapter, of such a confidence, as shall keep

ver. 28.



us from being *asham'd before our Saviour*, Ser. 12, at his coming to judge the world; and at the 10th verse of this chapter, of assuring or persuading our hearts and consciences before God; and his making an opposition, in the 20th and 21st verses, between God's condemning us with respect to our spiritual estate, and our having *confidence towards God*, are to me an undeniable evidence, that, by the confidence here spoken of, he must mean a confidence with relation to our spiritual estate. But this dispute may soon be cut short, by considering that this confidence that God will *accept our prayers*, must be grounded upon a confidence that we are in a state of grace and favour with God (and this reason the apostle gives for it, in this very place, *because we do those things which are pleasing in his sight*) and consequently this notion of a confidence, with respect to our spiritual estate, is, at least, included and implied in that other notion of it, which relates to the acceptance of our prayers.

And this confidence I take to be nothing else, but a good degree of hope, or, at the highest, of *moral assurance*, that we are  
in

Ser. 12. in a *state of grace and favour* with God;  a degree, I say, proportionable to that evidence, whatever it be, which our *consciences* have of our having *kept God's commandments, and done those things which are pleasing in his sight*. And because (by reason of the great *variety, mixedness* and *uncertainty* of our lives, the *deceitfulness* of our *hearts*, the *treacherousness* of our *memories*, and our excessive love of, and partiality towards, our selves) we cannot, ordinarily speaking, have from our consciences an absolute certainty and infallible assurance, that we have *thus kept God's commandments, and done those things which are pleasing in his sight*: therefore, I say, that we cannot, ordinarily speaking, attain to an absolute certainty and infallible assurance of our being in a *state of grace and favour* with God, that is, a *state of salvation*.

'Tis true indeed, that in extraordinary cases, as those of suffering to any great degree for the *sake of Christ*, and, much more, of *laying down our lives for him*, there is such a plain and undoubted evidence of our loving God above all things, and our willingness and desire to serve and glorify

glorify him, at any cost and pains, as must Ser. 12, needs give us a plain and undoubted assurance of our *doing those things which are pleasing in his sight*, and consequently of our being in a *state of grace, and favour with him*. And accordingly we find that this was one main ground of St. Paul's confidence and positive assurance of his salvation: *I am ready, saith he, to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.* And divines have generally agreed, that upon this single transcendent act of love and zeal for God and our Saviour, the offering ourselves to death for them, men might reasonably found an undoubted assurance of their being in a *state of salvation*. But, excepting these and such like extraordinary cases, I cannot see how good men can ordinarily attain to an absolute certainty and infallible assurance of their salvation. Unless it can be prov'd, that God has any where promis'd, ordinarily to inspire good men with such an assurance: which, I confess, I know nothing of.

No? some men will be apt to say; what then is the meaning of that *seal, pledge* and

Ser. 12. and *earnest of the spirit*; and of the *spirit's bearing witness with our spirit that we are the children of God*; and of that *plerophory*, that *full assurance* and *much assurance*, as we translate it, so often mention'd in scripture?

To this I answer, that, by all those expressions concerning the *Holy Spirit*, probably no more was meant, than the confirmation which the *Holy Spirit* gave to the truth of the christian religion, by its inward operations on the minds of christians; directing, exciting and assisting them to persevere in the faithful profession of it, and filling them with hope and joy unspeakable, in so doing. And farther, that, whatever else might be meant by these phrases, which it is not my business, neither have I time, now to enquire, it is certain, from their being apply'd to all christians in general, as they constantly are in scripture, that they could not mean an assurance from God that they should all actually be sav'd. And, as for the *plerophory* or *fulness of assurance*, mention'd in scripture, it is never so much as once us'd, with relation to the salvation of particular persons: or indeed, if it were, could  
signify

signify any more, than the fulness of their Ser. 12. persuasion or belief that they should be sav'd (which is the utmost sense of the word) but, by no means, an absolute certainty, or infallible assurance, of this.

And we are very far from asserting, that, in this sense, good men may not have a full and firm persuasion of their salvation: those of them, I mean, who have liv'd so very circumspectly and exactly, that they may be more than ordinarily sure of their having walk'd so as to have pleas'd God: and, having been guilty of very few errors and mistakes, have very little to make them doubtful, and to take off from this assurance. Nay, we will go yet farther, and allow that, in extraordinary cases, as those above-mention'd of *martyrdom*, &c. God has often vouchsafed infallibly to assure particular persons of their *salvation*: and probably, in the like cases, where such a support and comfort seem very needful, may do so again. But then we say, that this is not the ordinary way of God's dealing with mankind: that he has no where promis'd any such thing, and that our frequent experience of good mens want of it, even at the *hour of death*, when it seems



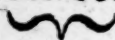
Ser. 12. seems most needful, in the ordinary course of things, doth abundantly prove that he doth not ordinarily bestow it. And we heartily wish, that, where this is pretended to, it be not very often from an *evil spirit*, rather than from the *good Spirit* of God: it being but too too visible, that a great many, who pretend to it, have not those other signs, which ought to accompany it, of their being *God's children*.

But, to apply what has been said.

*First*, Hence it appears what a weak and impertinent excuse it is, in many men, to say, when they are tax'd of any *fault*, that their *consciences doth not condemn* them for it: when, at the same time, it is most palpable and notorious, either that they have examin'd their consciences but slightly or superficially about it, or have not examin'd them at all: nay, perhaps have refus'd to hear what they have, of their own accord, offered to say to them, and have even violently stopp'd their mouths, that they might not speak. Conscience, as you have seen, is never a good excuse, but where it has been duly inform'd and instructed, has been suffer'd to act without impediment or prejudice, has  
taken

taken time and pains to consider things Ser. 12.  
well and thoroughly, and has form'd its judgment of any cause upon the best evidence and fullest knowledge, which it could possibly get, of the cause it self. And yet alas ! how often is conscience made an excuse for things, which men know little or nothing of : for things, which, to be sure, they have never thoroughly weigh'd and examin'd, as they ought to have done?

*Secondly*, Hence we see plainly what an excellent and useful thing *self-examination* is, when rightly perform'd : by which alone we can resolve our selves, in that most important of all questions, *whether we are in a state of salvation or no* : and accordingly, either take encouragement to continue in the way, in which we are, or caution, with all possible speed, to get into a better : as also, what a difficult and intricate work this is made, by *putting it off* and *delaying it*. And what is the natural inference from hence, but that, for the future, we should become very frequent and exact, in the performance of it? especially, considering that our holy church has set apart several portions of  
our

Ser. 12.  our time for this very purpose, and has taken sufficient care to warn and instruct us, rightly to apply these *sacred seasons*. Such are its *fasts* and *vigils*; the week before the administration of the *holy sacrament*; the whole time of *lent*; and more particularly, the *holy week*, or the week, as we commonly call it, of our *Saviour's passion*. And surely we, who are so eager to embrace all opportunities of settling our secular accounts, cannot, for shame, let slip these blessed opportunities of settling an account, which doth infinitely more nearly concern us, even the account of our *immortal souls*.

*Thirdly*, Hence we learn what an uncharitable, unjust and unreasonable thing it is, to censure good men, such as through their whole conversation have appear'd to us to be so, as to their final condition: to speak hardly of them, nay, as some are bold enough to do, to pronounce positively that they *cannot be sav'd*, only because they dare not declare themselves *absolutely sure of their salvation*; as also, what little reason we our selves have to be disturb'd and disquieted at such censures. As long as there is such a mixture, as there is even  
in

in the lives of very good men, of errors Ser. 12.  
and mistakes, with their righteousness: as  
long as there is modesty, and humility, and  
diffidence of our selves in the world (and  
this will be, as long as religion it self con-  
tinues in it) so long there will always be  
some little mixture of fear and doubtfulness,  
even in the hopes of good men concerning  
their *salvation*. However, this ought to  
be an hint to good men to walk still more  
carefully and circumspectly: that so they  
may *use all diligence to make their calling  
and election sure*, and have as little damp  
and allay, to this glorious hope, as is pos-  
sible.

*Lastly*, Hence we cannot but infer,  
what a comfortable and desirable thing a  
good conscience is. *Blessed is the man* Ecclus. 14.  
(saith the son of *Sirach*) *whose conscience*<sup>2.</sup>  
*hath not condemn'd him, and who is not*  
*fall'n from his hope in the Lord.* 26. 4. *Whe-*  
*ther a man be rich, or whether a man be*  
*poor, if he have a good heart towards the*  
*Lord, he shall at all times rejoyce with a*  
*cheerful countenance.* Blessed souls indeed!  
who can thus *rejoyce in the Lord ever-*  
*more*: who enjoy constant peace and com-  
placency of mind here, and these too as an

Ser. 12. *hopeful pledge and earnest of everlasting peace and happiness hereafter: who, tho' the pillars of the world should be shaken, though death should stare them in the face, or the last dreadful trumpet should summon them to judgment, yet would they not be dismay'd, but with an humble and modest confidence, put their trust in the Lord, and hope and stand fast in his mercy. Blessed, blessed souls! who already feed upon the food of angels; upon the delicious foretastes of the heavenly manna: in whose hearts the kingdom of heaven is already begun, and shall be daily growing and improving, till it attain its perfect consummation in bliss and glory, in heaven.*

O what would we not give for this *pearl of great price*, of inestimable value, *a good conscience*? Alas! there is no need of giving much for it. Let us but live agreeably to our own nature and reason, and sincerely endeavour to *please God in Christ Jesus*; and we already have it. To sum  
*Phil. 4. 8.* up all; in the apostle's words: *Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest; whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure,*



pure, whatsoever things are lovely, what- Ser. 12.  
soever things are of good report; if there  
be any virtue, and if there be any praise,  
think on these things.

And the God of peace shall be with Phil. 4. 9.  
you. And the peace of God, which pas- 7.  
seth all understanding, shall keep your  
hearts and minds through Jesus Christ.





## S E R M O N XIII.

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Preach'd before the QUEEN,  
in *Lent* 1705. at St. *James's*.

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Faith's Victory over the World and  
all its Temptations.

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I JOHN V. 4.

*For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.*



IN these words the apostle manifestly design'd to prevent an objection, which he foresaw men would be very apt to make, against the position which he had advanc'd, in the foregoing

going verse, viz. that *God's commandments are not grievous.* Ser. 13: To prove which to be false, they would be very apt to argue, that God's commandments must necessarily be grievous, since the world would be sure to give them a great deal of trouble, difficulty and opposition, in the keeping of them. Wherefore, that he might be before-hand with these objectors, he shews them plainly, in the words of my text, why this objection could not signify any thing: for, or because, *whatsoever is born of God*, every true child of God, every one that sincerely desires and endeavours to do his will, overcometh the world, hath power and strength sufficient to break through all this trouble, difficulty and opposition, which he is sure to meet with from the world; and to keep God's commandments, in spite of them.

*Whatsoever is born of God*, that is, every true christian: not every one that is baptiz'd in the name of Christ, but that is really and effectually born again of the *Holy Ghost*, so as to become a *partaker of the divine nature*. Every one that *doeth righteousness*, that *committeth no sin*, that is, that does not live in any habitual course

Ser. 13. of sin; but, on the contrary, in a constant course of piety and virtue, and that has *his seed remaining in him*, hath the seed of the *word of truth*, or, which comes to one, of the *Holy Spirit* (by both which men are said in scripture to be *regenerate* and *born again*) firmly and continually abiding in him, so as to be a constant and efficacious principle of spiritual life and action in him. As St. *John* himself describes one that is *born of God*, in several places of this very epistle.

*Overcometh the world*, so far gets the better of all manner of temptations, which he meets with in the world (whether from the *lust of the flesh*, the *lust of the eye*, or the *pride of life*: from himself or others: from bad men or bad things: from wicked spirits or deprav'd affections: from evil persuasions or evil examples: from blandishments and allurements, or from terrors and persecutions: and, in one word, from whatsoever is made use of to work either upon our hopes or our fears) that they shall never be able to draw him from his duty, in any instance; or, at least, if they do by great chance happen to surprize him unawares, shall not be able to lead him  
away

away captive, and detain him their prisoner long: but shall soon deliver him up again to the prevailing force of prayer and repentance, which, through the grace of God, shall securely *recover him from these snares of the devil.* Ser. 13.

*And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.* Our faith? that is, the faith of a christian; a firm and hearty belief of all the truths, but more especially of the *glorious promises*, of the gospel. *Is the victory*, is the means or instrument, by which this victory is to be obtain'd. Though methinks, something more, than barely this, should be meant, by this strong and emphatical phrase, *this is the victory.* And, probably enough, the apostle designed by it to signify farther, the *speediness* and *certainty of faith*, in obtaining this victory; inasmuch, that no sooner should faith appear against the world in the field, but the victory should be present and infallible, and faith and victory should be, as it were, one and the same thing.

The words thus explain'd lead me to discourse upon these following particulars.



Ser. 13. *First*, The obligation that lies upon all christians, thus to *overcome the world*; imply'd in those words, *Whatsoever is born of God*, every true christian, *overcometh the world*.

*Secondly*, The power and ability that every good christian has thus to *overcome the world*: every such one doth actually overcome it.

*Lastly*, That faith is the great and sure means, or instrument, by which this victory is to be obtain'd; *This is the victory, that overcometh the world, even our faith*.

*First*, The obligation that lies upon all christians, thus to overcome the world; imply'd in those words, *Whatsoever is born of God*, every true christian, *overcometh the world*. Now, besides that God hath frequently, and with great earnestness, requir'd this of us in scripture: that one great end of his Son's coming into the world was, to teach and enable us to do this: that, for this purpose, he hath given us both his own example, and the assistance of his spirit: and that, upon the condition of our doing this, he has suspended those *exceeding great and precious promises*, which he hath brought to light by

by the gospel : and moreover, that we our Ser. 13. selves have, in exprefs terms, and in a most solemn manner, promis'd and vow'd this in our baptism. Besides all this, I say, it is demonſtrable, from the very nature of things, that we cannot perform, ſo much as, any one duty of our christian religion, as we ought to do, without having firſt thus *overcome the world*. And confequently, our obligations thus to overcome it, are as many as our *christian duties* : and it is as neceſſary for us to do this, as it is to become *good christians*.

For alas ! there is no one duty of our christian life, in which we ſhall not be ſure to meet with temptations enough, to make the performance of it as difficult to us, as is poſſible. And confequently, if we have not pretty well made ourſelves proof againſt theſe temptations ; nay, if we are not fully prepar'd to reſiſt and vanquiſh them, the conflict will go hard againſt us, and we ſhall be ſure, if not to be beaten off wholly from our duty, yet at leaſt to perform it in a very lame and unacceptable manner.

And

Scr. 13. And indeed, what can we imagine was  
 ~~~~~ God's design, in placing us here in a state  
 of *trial* and *probation*, and in the midst of
 numberless and most powerful enemies and
 temptations of all kinds: but that we
 should give full proof of our being his
 faithful servants, and minister very much
 to his *praise* and *glory*, by manfully wrest-
 ling with, and getting the mastery over all
 manner of *opposition* and *temptation* for
his sake? It cannot be for his honour, that
 his servants should be *overcome*, and *sub-*
mit to any temptations; and therefore
 this, we may be sure, is what he never
 could design. But to fight his battles, to
 maintain his cause, to trample under foot
 his enemies, to triumph under his banner:
 this is his glory, and therefore this must
 infallibly be our duty.

Wherefore, not to insist any longer on
 so plain a case; let me rather exhort you
 to that, which seems to be abundantly
 more needful to use your utmost *care* and
diligence, in performing this so evidently
 necessary a duty; to *arise* and *be doing*,
 and, since the temptations of the world
 must be overcome by us, or we ourselves
 must be overcome by them, to pluck up a
 good

good courage, and resolve for victory. To Ser. 13.
consider, on the one hand; how *pitiful*,
how *ignominious*, how infinitely *fatal*, a
foil, in this case, must prove: on the o-
ther hand, how *honourable*, how *glorious*,
how everlastingly *beneficial* a victory.
And, by these and such like considerations,
to animate our selves to the *battle*, in
which, if we do but sincerely do our part,
we have not the least reason to fear that
we shall *fail* of *success* and *victory*. As
will more plainly appear, from consider-
ing,

Secondly, The *power* and *ability* that
every good christian has thus to overcome
the world; every such one doth actually
overcome it. It might be conviction e-
nough to any good christian, that he shall
be able to *overcome the world*, merely to
consider that God has commanded him to
overcome it, as well knowing that a good
God cannot command us to do any thing,
which he has not given us power to do.
But, besides this, God has graciously been
pleas'd explicitly to assure us, that this
may be done, that, if we do not *give* ^{1 Eph. 4.}
place to the devil, but *resist* him, *resist* ^{27.}
him stedfast in the faith, he will *flee from*
1 Pet. 5.9.
us :

396 Faith's Victory over the World

Ser. 13. *us : that God will bruise Satan under*
 our feet : and that he will not suffer us
 to be tempted above what we shall be
 able : but will with the temptation also
 make a way to escape, that we may be
 able to bear it.

Sec Rom.
 16. 20.
 Rev. 12.
 10
 1 Cor. 10.
 13.

And indeed, when we seriously reflect, that we are under the all-powerful conduct and assistance of God's *Holy Spirit* : and that we have an *exceeding* and *eternal weight of glory* laid in the balance against the *world* and its *temptations*, it is no wonder that we should become an *overmatch* for them. For, as St. John argues, in the 4th chap. of this epistle, at the 4th verse, *Greater is he that is in us, the Holy Spirit that abides and dwells in all good christians, than he that is in the world : than the spirit, that worketh in the children of disobedience.* The devil, the *prince of this world*, how strong soever, yet must here confess his *weakness*, and shall surely find, that there are *stronger* than he. And who would not *press toward the mark* for the *prize of the high-calling of God in Christ Jesus* ? What *difficulties*, what *temptations*, shall be able to stop him in his *course*, under what

what *discouragements* what *tribulations*, Ser. 13. can he *faint*, who runs not for a *corruptible crown*, but an *incorruptible* : who has *such joys set before him*, as eye never saw, ear never heard, and as it never entred into the heart of man to conceive ?

Farthermore, it must be consider'd that our blessed Lord did, in his own person, overcome the world, all its best and choicest temptations, all its severest terrors and persecutions, the whole artillery of which it discharged at once upon him, on purpose, that we might be of good cheer, as he himself expresseth it ; that seeing the prince of this world cast out by him, we ^{Joh. 16.} might be sensibly convinc'd that this thing, ^{33.} how difficult soever, is not impracticable : and that we might not be afraid to enter the lists, where the Captain of our salvation had both shew'd and broken the way before us.

Nay, and not only our blessed Lord, but all his faithful followers and disciples, have thus overcome the world, after his example. How perfectly had St. Paul crucify'd it to him, and himself to it ? How triumphantly did he defy its worst, in those
most

398' Faith's Victory over the World

Ser. 13. most glorious words, *Romans* the 8th, 35,
 37, 38, 39. *Who shall separate us from
 the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or
 distress, or persecution, or famine, or na-
 kedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all
 these things we are more than conquerors,
 through him that loved us. For I am
 persuaded that neither death, nor life,
 nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers,
 nor things present, nor things to come.
 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other
 creature, shall be able to separate us,
 from the love of God, which is in Christ
 Jesus our Lord. And what a noble army
 of martyrs has the christian church in all
 ages had, that have left father and mo-
 ther, wives and children, houses and
 lands, nay and even their very lives
 themselves for the love of Christ and his
 gospel? And, blessed be God, there have
 been never wanting many such christians in
 the world, who, tho' they have not been
 call'd out to resist unto blood, yet have
 manfully resisted such temptations as they
 have been call'd to: have fought a good
 fight, have overcome the wicked one; and,
 in spite of numberless and most power-
 ful*

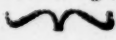
ful temptations to the contrary, have kept *Ser. 13.*
themselves unspotted from the world.

Wherefore, my brethren, as the apostle *Eph. 6.10.*
 speaks, be strong in the Lord, and in the
 power of his might. Put on the whole *11.*
 armour of God, that you may be able to
 stand against the wiles of the devil. And
 then, tho' we wrestle not against flesh and *12.*
 blood, but against principalities, against
 powers, against the rulers of the dark-
 ness of this world, against spiritual wic-
 kedness in high places: yet still we shall
 be able to withstand in the evil day, and, *13.*
 having done all to stand. Above all, if
 we take the shield of faith, or, as it is in
 another place, the breast-plate of faith, *1 Thess. 5.*
 wherewith we shall be able to quench all *8, 16.*
 the fiery darts of the wicked. Which
 brings me to my last head, and which I
 chiefly design'd to speak to, viz.

Thirdly, That faith is the great and
 sure means or instrument, by which this
 victory is to be obtain'd; And this is
 the victory that overcometh the world,
 even our faith. What the apostle here
 means by faith, he himself explains in the
 verse immediately following my text, viz.
 a believing that Jesus is the Son of God;
 that

{
 Ser. 13. that is in effect, a believing the *whole* gospel of Christ. And how much such a faith, as this, will help towards our obtaining a sure and compleat victory over the world, will appear from the following particulars.

First, It is this faith, which directs us in the true way of overcoming the world ; which informs us aright of the state and condition of our spiritual enemies, their prodigious *number, strength, diligence and subtlety* (things which *mere reason* was but little acquainted with) and forewarns us to prepare and arm our selves accordingly, against their assaults. To *accustom* ourselves to *self-denial* and *mortification*, and, by this means, to *harden* our selves against all manner of *temptations* : to watch continually, to be always upon our guard, and to use our *utmost diligence, lest at any time we fall into the condemnation of the devil*. More especially, it is this faith, which makes us duly sensible of our *insufficiency* to maintain this combat, against the world, upon our own strength (a thing which the wisest of natural men never thoroughly understood) and therefore puts us upon praying
ing

ing earnestly to God for his assistance, Ser. 13.
thro' the strength of which we know we 
may be *enabled to do all things*. Phil. 4. 13

Secondly, It is *faith*, that proposeth the noblest *motives* and *encouragements* to us, to excite our *courage* and *resolution*, and *animate* us to this combat, against the world and its temptations, with all the *zeal* and *vigour* possible. There are but three things necessary to spur on rational agents to any enterprize whatsoever: and they are, a sense of its being their *duty*, of its being *feasible*, and of its being vastly for their *honour* and *interest*; nay, and even absolutely necessary, to secure them from *everlasting* ruin and destruction, and obtain for them *everlasting happiness* and *glory*. And all these *faith* makes use of, to encourage us, in the case before us. Our *duty* in this point is plainly legible, almost in every page of the gospel: the *feasibility* of it abundantly appears, both from the consideration of the divine *assistance* and *rewards*, which are there again and again promis'd, to *encourage* and *enable* us to perform it, and the many illustrious *examples* of our blessed Lord and his faithful followers and disciples, who have all

Ser. 13. actually perform'd it : and the infinite danger of our not performing it, the infinite glory and happiness of our performing it, are there set forth to us, in such a lively and pathetic manner, as must certainly very much affect and influence us, if any thing can.

Thirdly, Faith does not only assure us of the divine *assistance* and *rewards*, in and *for* the performance of this duty ; but it is moreover itself a means of procuring and obtaining them for us. It is to *faith* only, a *true* and *lively* belief of these things, that the promises of them are made ; and, *according to our belief, will it be done unto us*. And what our blessed Saviour said to his disciples, of the *extraordinary gifts* of the *Holy Spirit*, is every whit as true of these *ordinary* ones, *Mark 11. believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.*

Lastly, Faith will be always present with us, in the very instant of temptation, and suggest such thoughts, afford such helps, administer such *inward refreshments* and *consolations* to us, as shall be most proper and able to support us in this time of trial. For *faith*, true *faith*, is a very lively and active

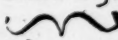
active principle, always awake, and always upon its guard; and consequently, *whenever or where-ever* it shall be attack'd, it will be always ready to make a brave and vigorous defence. Ser. 13.

Are we tempted to commit sin, as *Joseph* was, by all the most prevailing charms of *flesh and sense*? *Faith* will be presently suggesting to us, as it did to him, *How* Gen. 39: *can you do this great wickedness and sin⁹ against God?* Remember that *the world* 1 Joh. 2. *passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he¹⁷ that doth the will of God abideth for ever;* Remember that *whore-mongers and adul-* Heb. 13. 4. *terers God will judge; that they shall be cast into the lake of brimstone; but he,* Rev. 21. 8. *that glorifieth God with his body, shall receive a glorified body from him, for ever and ever.* Your temptation indeed is strong: but your power to overcome it infinitely stronger. The pleasure which you are at present invited to, may seem very great; but alas! the punishment, if you embrace it, the reward, if you refuse it, will be infinitely greater.

Doth the world attempt, by large offers of worldly goods, *riches, honour, power, &c.* to bribe and buy us off from our duty,

404 *Faith's Victory over the World*

- Ser. 13. and consequently from our *care* of our
 ~~~~~ *souls* ? How ready will *faith* be, to put  
 Mark 8. that question of our Saviour's to us, *What*  
 36, 37. *will it profit a man, if he shall gain the*  
*whole world, and lose his own soul, or*  
*what shall a man give in exchange for his*  
*soul* ? How ready to remind us, that it  
 Job. 5. 44. doth not become *believers* to receive ho-  
*nour one of another, and not seek the ho-*  
*nour that cometh from God only* ; that he  
 Matt. 10. that loveth houses or lands better than  
 33. *our Saviour*, is not worthy of him, is a  
 Mark 8. *denyer of him*, and shall be *denied by him*,  
 38. *before his father and his holy angels, at*  
*the day of judgment* ? How sure to preach  
 Luke 14. the apostles doctrine to us, that *the love*  
 26. *of money* the immoderate love of it, is  
*the root of all evil* : that *they that will*  
*be rich*, that resolve right or wrong to be  
 1 Tim. 6. so, *fall into temptation and a snare, and*  
 2, [10. *into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which*  
*drown men in destruction and perdition* :  
*err from the faith, and pierce themselves*  
*through with many sorrows* ; but on the  
 1 Sam. 2. contrary, that *those who honour God, he*  
 30. *will honour*, and that too with *such ho-*  
*nours*, as this world has not to give : that  
 1 Tim. 6. *godliness with contentment is great gain* :  
 6. that

that *a small thing that the righteous hath*, Ser. 13.  
*is better than great riches of the ungod-*  
*ly* : that happy, beyond all expression hap-   
 py, is that man, who is *rich towards God*,  
 who hath *treasure in heaven*, tho' little  
*upon earth* ; who enjoys the *continual feast*  
*of a good conscience*, and has that true  
*greatness of mind* which his blessed Lord  
 had, to despise the *kingdoms of the earth*,  
*and the glory of them*, when offer'd upon  
 so base and scandalous a condition, as that  
*of falling down and worshipping the de-* Matt. 3.8,  
*vil* ; or which is the same thing in other <sup>9, 10.</sup>  
 words, wilfully doing any thing that in  
 our consciences we believe not to be right  
 for the sake of them.

And so, on the other side, are we under  
 great tribulations or afflictions of any kind,  
 and by these tempted to repine and mur-  
 mur against God? hear what comfortable  
 and encouraging words *faith* will speak  
 to us. *Whom the Lord loveth he chasti-* Heb. 12. 6,  
*seth, and scourgeth every son whom he* <sup>10.</sup>  
*receiveth. He chasteneth us for our pro-*  
*fit, that we may be partakers of his*  
*holiness. He comforts us in all tribula-* 2 Cor. 1. 4,  
*tion, and so orders it, that, as the suffer-* <sup>5.</sup>  
*ings of Christ abide in us, so our conso-*

## 406      *Faith's Victory over the World*

Ser. 13. *lation abideth by Christ. He will never*  
 Heb. 13. 5 *leave us, nor forsake us. Wherefore let*  
*us be faithful unto death: and then too*  
*he will give us a crown of life. And we*  
 Rom. 8. 18. *know, that the sufferings of this present*  
*life are not worth to be compar'd with*  
*the glory that shall be reveal'd in us.*  
 2 Cor. 4. 17. *For these are but light afflictions, and*  
*that too only for a moment, that an ex-*  
*ceeding, nay, and an eternal, weight of*  
*glory.*

Above all; do we suffer for *righteous-*  
*ness sake?* That is, not only for *professing*  
*the faith of Christ, but for acting accord-*  
 1 Pet. 3. 14. *ing to his Laws; for daring to lead virtu-*  
*ous and religious lives, against the fashion:*  
*for daring to be honest, and to hold fast our*  
*integrity, in the most difficult and trying*  
*times: for studying to please God rather*  
*than Man: and for doing our duties, in*  
*our respective stations, with all prudent*  
*courage and resolution. Do we suffer up-*  
*on these accounts, I say? Oh how certainly,*  
*how infallibly, will faith assure us, that we*  
 1 Pet. 4. 14. *are then happy; that the spirit of glory and*  
*of peace resteth upon us; that we ought to*  
 Rom. 5. 3. *glory and rejoice in this tribulation, to give*  
 2 Cor. 7. 4. *all possible praise to God, who has accounted*



*us worthy to suffer thus in his name, and Ser. 13. to take joyfully the spoiling of our goods,* <sup>Heb. 10.</sup> *on this behalf, knowing that in heaven we 34. have a better and more enduring substance.*

This is the charming rhetoric, this the all-conquering power, of a true and lively faith: thus vastly doth she outbid the most winning allurements and enticements to sin, which this world can offer: thus easily doth she repel and overcome the most formidable strength, which this world and all its powers can bring against us.

And is not this *weapon then of our warfare mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strong holds?* Will not this *cast* <sup>2 Cor. 10.</sup> *down every imagination that exalteth it* <sup>4, 5.</sup> *self, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ?* Can we possibly fail of victory, with God on our side, and heaven for our reward? Can we believe our duty, our honour, our everlasting interest to be at stake, and yet *faint in the day of battle?* Oh! no; even in this sense, *all things are possible to him that believeth.*

And oh! the glorious attempts, the illustrious successes, the triumphant victories, that have ever attended a true and lively

Ser. 13. faith! Oh the heroick actions, that have been  
 done! Oh the more heroick sufferings, that  
 have been endur'd, upon this principle! How  
 readily did *Abraham*, at God's command,

Heb. 11. *leave his country, his kindred and his father's house, for a strange land, whilst he look'd for a city, that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God? How cheerfully did he, when he was try'd, offer up his only begotten son Isaac, and him too the son of the promise: accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead? How easily did Moses refuse to be call'd the son of Pharaoh's daughter: how did he make it his choice, rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season: how heartily did he esteem the reproaches of Christ, greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: while he had respect unto the recompence of reward, and endur'd, as seeing him that is invisible? And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of those, who through faith subdu'd kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtain'd promises, stop'd the mouths of lions, quench'd the violence of fire,*  
*weak-*

*escap'd the edge of the sword, out of Ser. 13,  
 weakness were made strong, waxed  
 valiant in fight, turn'd to flight the  
 armies of aliens, were tortur'd, not  
 accepting deliverance, that they might  
 obtain a better resurrection. And others  
 had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings,  
 yea moreover, of bands and imprisonment.  
 They were ston'd, they were sawn asun-  
 der, were tempted, were slain with the  
 sword: they wandred about in sheep-skins  
 and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted,  
 tormented. They fear'd no dangers, they  
 shun'd no difficulties, which God was  
 pleas'd to lay in their way: but *couragiously,*  
*gloriously, triumphantly, encounter'd* and <sup>2 Cor. 4.</sup>  
*broke thro' all, while they look'd not at the* <sup>18.</sup>  
*things, which are seen, and are temporal:*  
*but unto the things, which are not seen,*  
*and are eternal.**

And oh! were our faith like theirs, our  
 successes would surely be like theirs too;  
 but here alas! our cause fails us, our faith  
 is weak, and then by consequence, our de-  
 fence of our selves against the temptati-  
 ons of the world, must be weak too. But  
 are there no ways to strengthen a weak  
 faith? yes, blessed be God, very many:  
 some

**Ser. 13.** some of the principal of which I shall just mention, and so conclude. As,

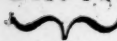
*First*, Often to consider, what good and sure grounds we have, for the belief of the gospel; which proves it self to be from God, not only from its own intrinsick worth and excellency, and its near resemblance and exact agreeableness to our purest notions of the *divine nature* : nor yet from its supernatural success and influence over the world, without any visible power, conquering all those mighty powers of the world that oppos'd it, and insinuating it self into the esteem and affections of mankind, even against all the violent prejudices and prepossessions of *education, custom, worldly interest, &c.* nor *lastly*, by the testimony which the best and wisest men of all ages have given to it, by forsaking all that was dear to them, nay, even sacrificing their very lives, for the sake of it; but also, by direct testimonies of all kinds, from God himself: by the concurrent predictions of his prophets; by angels sent for this purpose; by the descent of the *Holy Ghost* upon him; by his *own voice from heaven*, and by *signs and wonders, and divers miracles and gifts of the*

*the*

*the Holy Ghost*, which our blessed Lord Ser. 13. and his disciples wrought in *the face of all the world*: and all which, we have an history of firm and undoubted credit, of infinitely greater credit than any of those, which we most readily embrace for true, to bear witness to.

*Secondly*, Frequently to reflect upon the power of faith, in this very instance of overcoming temptations; to read over the catalogue of those many worthies, mention'd in the 11th chapter to the *Hebrews*, which I just now quoted, and consider the mighty achievements of their faith, to peruse the lives, deaths and martyrdoms, of the apostles and first christians, and behold how they, through faith, made all manner of temptations *flee before them*: and, above all, to *look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endur'd such contradiction of sinners, nay, despis'd the shame, and endur'd the ignominious and painful death of the cross it self*. And surely this, if any thing, will convince us what a divine thing faith is, with what a more than human energy it works, and how vastly it surpasseth the power of all those



Ser. 12.  those principles, which pure simple reason and philosophy were ever able to furnish men with. This sure will perfectly transport us, make our hearts glow within us, and inspire us with a true christian emulation of trying to come up to the examples of these *illustrious champions* of faith, who have so successfully made good their conflict against the world, in their day.

*Thirdly*, Let us make trial of the power of faith *upon our selves*, by giving our selves up strictly to a *life of faith*. Without doubt, the true reason why men have so little faith is, because, through their own fault, they have never, or but very little, experienc'd the vital power and influence of it, upon themselves: and how can a man possibly become duly sensible of the power of that principle, which he has never duly try'd? We see, in fact, that when, by some extraordinary accident, some grievous affliction, a great fit of sickness, near danger of dying, &c. our faith is well awaken'd and rouz'd within us, then it is able to do wonders: then it helps us with ease to perform those duties, and to vanquish those temptations, which we before thought exceeding difficult, if  
at

at all to be surmounted. And, as long as Ser. 13.  
our faith continues thus vigorous and lively, so long our easiness of overcoming temptations continues too. So that if we would but exercise and accustom our selves to stir up, and keep alive, this principle of faith within us, this would be, both a natural means to shew us every day more and more its usefulness and power, and consequently to recommend it every day more and more to our judgment and affections : and also a sure means of grace to obtain, from God, a supernatural encrease of it. He, who doth his best to live according to his present measure of faith, be it what it will, shall undoubtedly receive strength and power from God, to proceed *from faith to faith*, from one degree of it to another. He, who sincerely conducts his whole course of life, upon this principle ; who aims at nothing so much, as the pleasing God, upon the motives and encouragements of the gospel, will soon find his strength to resist temptations grow upon him : and every little victory over them will be to such an one, a pledge and infallible assurance of a much greater presently to come. Faith, like all other habits,

Ser. 13. bits, improves best by use and exercise ;  
 ~~~~~ faith, like all other christian graces, will  
 be rewarded with an encrease, in propor-
 tion to the advantage which we make of
 that stock, which we already have of it.

Lastly, Let us earnestly beg of God to
encrease our faith, and constantly and di-
 ligently make use of those ordinances,
 which he hath appointed, as the ordinary
 means for obtaining an encrease of it. For
 Ephes. 2. *faith*, as St. Paul tells us, is the *gift of*
 8. *God*, and therefore is no more to be ob-
 tain'd without prayer, than any other of
 his *good gifts* are. And accordingly we
 find, that our Lord's apostles betook them-
 selves to this way, of procuring an encrease
 of their faith ; *Lord, say they, encrease our*
 Luke 17. *faith*.
 5.

But, besides prayer, there are other
 means also instituted by God, or those
 commission'd by him, for this purpose :
 upon which if we are not careful duly to
 attend, we must e'en blame our selves, if
 we do not find our faith improve as fast
 as we would have it. Such are *hearing*
the word, frequenting the *publick wor-*
ship, partaking of the *holy sacrament*, and
 observing those *sacred seasons*, which the
 church

church has fet apart for this very end, to *Ser. 13.*
encrease our faith, and make us proof a-
gainst temptation, in such a religious man-
ner as the church has prescrib'd to us: by
mortifying our bodies with such degrees of
fasting, as we find will best serve the ends
of religion: by allotting more of our time
than ordinary, to the exercises of *devotion*,
reading the scriptures, and *divine medi-*
tation: and by contemplating largely on
the examples of those glorious saints and
servants of God, who have, *through ma-*
ny tribulations, *enter'd into the kingdom*
of heaven: and more especially that of
the *Son of God*, who *was tempted in all*
points like as we are, though in a vastly
higher degree, but yet *was without sin*,
easily overcame all manner of temptations:
as may be seen, almost in every part of
his life, but chiefly in that great and holy
week, the week of his passion, now ap-
proaching.

Oh glorious work! in which the whole
powers of earth and hell combin'd toge-
ther, were totally routed, overcome, and
utterly defeated, by the Son of God ap-
pearing in humane nature: in which, the
man Christ Jesus spoil'd principalities
and

416 *Faith's Victory over the World*

Ser. 13. *and powers, and made a shew of them*
openly, triumphing over them; in which
 death lost its sting, sin its dominion, and
 the head of the old serpent was so terribly
 bruis'd, by the *seed of the woman*, that
 he shall never more recover his former
 strength. *Dearest Jesu!* is it possible
 for us seriously to consider *thy compleat*
victory over the world, the flesh and the
 devil, and yet to continue afraid of them?
 Is it possible to consider how triumphant-
 ly thou, the *captain of our salvation*,
fought'st a good fight, finished'st thy course,
and led'st even captivity it self captive,
 and yet to grow *weary and faint in our*
minds? Is it possible to behold the very
 prints of those steps, by which thou hast
 mark'd out the way for us to victory;
 and not immediately to tread in them,
 and securely confide, that, in so doing, we
 shall become *more than conquerors?*

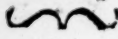
These, these, my dear christian brethren,
 are sure ways to strengthen a weak faith:
 to *build us up*, to *stablish us*, to make
 us *stedfast and immoveable* in that true
 christian faith, *which overcometh the*
world.

And

And oh blessed day! when we shall Ser. 13.
 have once thoroughly possess'd our souls,
 with such a vigorous and effective faith as
 this, full of the hopes of victory and im-
 mortality. How little, good God! how
 little, will the biggest temptation of this
 world look, in the eye of such a faith?
 How soon will all our mountains of diffi-
 culties be remov'd; how easy will it be to
keep all God's commandments; how plain
 will the way be, to truth, to honesty, to
 peace, to private, to publick happiness;
 when the *God of this world* shall be once
 stripp'd, by faith, of all his power over
 us? When he shall no longer hinder us,
 from seeing *the things which make for*
peace, and things whereby we may edify
one another? But the gospel of peace shall
 be our only guide, and the peace, which
 that promiseth, our only, at least our chief,
 aim?

As therefore we love our selves or o-
 thers, our present or future happiness: as
 we have any regard for truth, or right, or
 peace, or charity: as we value our own,
 much more God's and our blessed Saviour's
 honour: in one word, as we have any sense
 of what is rational, and becoming, and our

418 *Faith's Victory over the World*

Ser. 13. positive duty : as we love our own true
 interest, as we desire our own everlasting
welfare : as we are men, much more as
we are christians ; let us be conjur'd to
walk by faith, and not by sight, to live
above this world, the customs, the fashi-
ons, the temptations of it, and, whatever
it may cost us, to crucify and subdue it to
our selves, entirely to keep under and over-
come it. Always bearing in mind those
glorious promises, which our blessed Lord
himself hath made to him that obtains this
victory ;

*He that overcometh shall be cloth'd in
white raiment, and I will not blot
his name out of the book of life ; but
I will confess his name before my Fa-
ther, and before his angels. I will
make him a pillar in the temple of
my God, and he shall go no more out :
and I will write upon him the name
of my God, and the name of the city
of my God, which is the new Jeru-
salem, which cometh down out of
heaven, from my God : and I will
write upon him my new name. And
oh glorious words that follow ! what
shall*

and all its Temptations.

419

shall we not be most willing to do, Ser. 13.
or to suffer for the sake of them? ~~~~~

*And I will grant to him, to sit with
me in my throne: even as I also
overcame, and am set down with my
Father, in his throne.*



E e 2

SER-



S E R M O N XIV.

Preach'd before the QUEEN,
Nov. 1706, at St. James's.

The danger of talking much, and
wisdom of the contrary.

PROVERBS X. 19.

In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips, is wise.



HERE is hardly any one instance, in the whole conduct of humane life, in which men are more apt to offend, and yet seem to be less sensible of their offending, than in the management

ment of their tongues. For though, as St. Ser. 14. James tells us, *the tongue is such an unruly evil, as no man can perfectly tame*; ^{Eccl. 5. 13. v. 6.} though it is full of deadly poison, setteth on fire the whole course of nature, and defileth the whole body; though honour and ^{Prov. 18. 21.} shame, death and life are in the power of it: yet is there nothing more common, than to see men extremely negligent and careless, rash, hasty and inconsiderate, in their use of it. So far are they from observing that most excellent precept of being *slow to speak*, that they are generally ^{Jam. 1. 19.} a great deal too lavish and prodigal of their tongues: and, when once they are engag'd in talk, and ever so little heated with it, they very often let fly at random, and foolishly blurt out every thing, that comes uppermost; how much soever it may tend, to the dishonour of God, the prejudice of their neighbour, or the eternal ruin of their own precious and immortal souls.

The wise man, being well aware of this, takes occasion frequently, in this book of *Proverbs*, to caution us against much talking: by representing to us, on the one hand, the great danger which we should

Ser. 14. bring our selves into, by it: and, on the
 ~~~~~ other hand, the great wisdom and advantage of abstaining from it. Thus, in chap. xxix. 20. *Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? there is more hope of a fool than of him;* and again, chap. xvii. 27. *He that hath knowledge spareth his words;* and, to name no more, in the words of my text, *In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin*, or, as the *Septuagint* version has it, *in talking much thou shalt not avoid sin*: if you allow your self an unbounded liberty of perpetual talking, you will certainly say many such things, as are inexpedient and unlawful for you to say, or, as it is yet higher in the original, *in the multitude of words sin shall not cease*: it shall not cease indeed, but rather it shall abound, and in much talking there shall be a continual danger of much sinning. But *he that refraineth his lips is wise*; he who keeps his tongue within due bounds, considers before he speaks, and speaks, not much, but seasonably, and to the purpose: this man acts, in this respect, as becomes, not only a prudent, but also a truly good and religious man.

By words here we are not to understand Ser. 4.  
all words in general, but only those of our  
common conversation: for, in many cases,  
there is no danger at all of sinning in using  
many words, as in the case of all set and  
premeditated discourses: nay, in some ca-  
ses, it is a necessary duty to speak much;  
speaking being the very business and pro-  
fession of a great part of mankind. And  
therefore this *apophthegm* of the wise man's  
must not be taken universally, but in a re-  
strain'd and limited sense, as relating only  
to those men, who are perpetually chat-  
tering in company, who use many need-  
less words, and may, in *Solomon's* language,  
more properly be call'd *prating fools*, than Prov. 10.  
men of *argument* and *business*. 10.

From the words thus explain'd, I shall  
take occasion to represent to you,

*First*, The great difficulty, or rather  
impossibility, of talking much, and talk-  
ing *innocently*, in the multitude of words  
*sin shall not cease*.

*Secondly*, The great wisdom of refrain-  
ing our lips, of considering before we  
speak, and avoiding all rash and unadvis'd  
talk; *He that refraineth his lips is wise*.

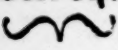
Ser. 14. *First*, The great difficulty, or rather impossibility, of talking much and talking innocently. There are so many several ways of offending with our tongues, both against God and against man: by prophane and atheistical, lewd and irreligious, light and scoffing discourses: by reproach and scandal, by slander and detraction, by false defamations and uncharitable truths, by lying and equivocation, by court and flattery, by bragging and boasting, by murmuring and complaining, by arrogancy and positiveness, &c. and the tongue is in its own nature such an unruly member, so very apt to run into all this variety of sin, that those who have been most careful in bridling it in, yet have found it an impracticable task to keep it always within due bounds. And therefore St. James had

Jam. 3. 2. great reason to call him, *who offends not in word, a perfect man*; and the son of

Eccles. 14. *Sirach* to pronounce him *blessed, who hath not slipped with his mouth, and is not prick'd with the multitude of his sins*; where, to my present purpose, he seems to make a *multitude of sins*, the natural consequence of *slipping with the mouth*. And indeed this is such a *perfection*, such a blessing

*blessing, as no man ever yet arrived at, Ser. 14.*  
 *the blessed Jesus only excepted, in whose* <sup>1 Pet. 2.</sup> *mouth there was no guile.* All other the  
 most eminent patterns of piety and virtue, recorded in scripture, have had their slips and failings in this point; and, notwithstanding all their utmost care and vigilance, have been betray'd into sin, by their tongues. *Moses*, who was the meekest of men, and therefore we may be sure not given to rash talking, yet spake sometimes *unadvisedly with his lips*; and *David*, that man *after God's own heart*,<sup>33</sup> who seems generally to have been very jealous and watchful over this treacherous member his tongue, yet in *Uriah's* case suffer'd it to play the hypocrite; spake words indeed unto him which were *smoother* <sup>2 Sam. 11.</sup> *than oyl*, but he soon found them, without a figure, to be *very swords*. Nay, <sup>Pf. 55. 21.</sup> even those two great apostles of our Saviour, *St. Peter* and *St. Paul* must plead guilty in this case: since the *one* deny'd *his Master*, and the *other*, by his own confession, contrary to the law of God, *reviled the high-priest*. <sup>Acts 23. 5.</sup>

Since this is so; since even these holy men, who took great heed to their ways,<sup>Pf. 39. 1.</sup>  
 that

Ser. 14. *that they might not offend with their*  
 *tongues*, were nevertheless sometimes overtaken in a fault, and unawares drawn into the devil's snare ; what can be expected from those men, who take no heed to their ways at all, but talk, as without measure, so without care ? Since those, who us'd the greatest caution, and set the strictest guard upon the *door of their lips*, were nevertheless sometimes surpriz'd into a transgression of their duty ; what can be expected from those men, who are so far from keeping any guards upon their tongues, that they entirely let loose the reins to them, and suffer them to ramble whithersoever they please ? What indeed can be expected from them, but that their whole talk should be one continu'd transgression, and that the unruly member, being once unbridled, should furiously hurry them into all sorts of extravagance, surpass all bounds, and trample upon all laws ?

And yet this alas ! must necessarily be the case of every man, who accustoms himself to talk much. Consideration, which is the only check upon the tongue, and alone is able to keep it to its good behaviour ;



viour; because it is this alone which in-Ser. 14.  
forms it of its duty, and at once represents  
to it, and warns it against, the many dangerous ways of transgressing it. Consideration, I say, must necessarily be thrown off by such a man, because he talks abundantly faster than he can possibly think, I mean, than he can think to purpose, than he can judge and deliberate what is lawful and expedient for him to say. For in such a case as this, where there are so many rules to be observ'd, and so many by-paths to be avoided, judgment and deliberation can proceed but slowly, and may more properly be said to creep than fly: and if so, he who is hasty, or, as the *septuagint* and *Prov. 29.*  
*vulgar Latin* translate it, *swift in his* <sup>20.</sup>  
*words*, will certainly go too fast for his judgment, and leave all consideration behind him; and, if all consideration, all law and all restraint; nay, and I may safely add, all religion also; since religion it self can have no security any where but there, where its laws are constantly and duly remembred and consider'd.

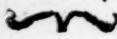
*Theophrastus*, in his *moral characters*, cap. 3.  
has aptly enough describ'd this sort of men  
to be *babblers of long and unpremeditated*  
*discourses*:

*Ser. 14. discourses*: this is indeed their true and proper character: they think little, but talk much, and are in continual danger of transgressing many rules, but have regard to none at all. Nor can they take it ill, that I fix this character upon them, since it is exactly agreeable to that, which upon all occasions they give themselves. For, if at any time you tax them with having said what they ought not, they immediately endeavour to excuse themselves, by telling you, that they had *no manner of meaning or design in what they said*: that they had not the least thought of good or harm in it, that it slipped all from them by chance and unawares, was the effect of carelessness, and entirely owing to inadvertency. And indeed I must do them that right, as to own that their excuse is true, tho' it is not valid; and that their discourses are generally all inadvertency from the very beginning to the end of them. And, since they are so, I think we need no longer wonder, that we so often hear them blaspheming God and reproaching men; we need no longer wonder that, as the *Psalmist* elegantly expresseth it,

*Ps. 73. 9. their tongue walketh through the earth,*  
or

or that *their mouths are sometimes set* Ser. 14.  
*against the heavens also.* ~~~~~

But why do I endeavour to convince you of a truth, which is own'd by every one of you in your practice, if not in your discourse? For what else do ye in effect say, when ye refuse to trust these perpetual talkers with your secrets, as all wise men do, but that ye very well know them to be a sort of men, who never regard one word they say, who talk all at random, and at a venture, and will be very apt, in the heat and intemperance of their discourse, notwithstanding all the sacred laws of friendship, nay and perhaps the most solemn promises to the contrary too, to divulge the most hidden and important secrets; insomuch that it is now almost become a proverb, that such people are to be trusted with nothing, but what all the world may know. And then surely, if there be so much danger of their forgetting all the laws and obligations of friendship, there can be no little danger of their forgetting all the laws and obligations of religion also; since the same incogitancy in talking, which makes them subject to forgetfulness

Ser. 14. getfulness in the one case, will make them  
 equally subject to it in the other also.

And Lord! what a prodigious heap of  
 sins must that poor wretch needs amass to-  
 gether, who is perpetually thus talking,  
 without thought and without rule? How  
 mightily will *iniquity there abound*, where  
 men tamely give themselves up to the wild  
 and extravagant conduct of the tongue,  
*Jam. 3. 6.* which is itself a *whole world of iniquity*?  
 Will not the sins of such men be almost  
 as numberless as their words, and their  
 transgressions of their duty as various as  
 the ways of transgressing it? Oh! whither  
 will their ungovern'd tongues hurry them,  
 but to that hell, by which they were at  
 first set on fire, and in which they shall  
 at last burn, without so much as the least  
 drop of water to cool them to all eter-  
 nity?

Consider this, all ye that are *full of*  
*talk*, as *Job* expresseth it, and be afraid;  
 think seriously with your selves, as the  
*Prov. 18 7.* wise man tells us, that a *fool's mouth is*  
*Eccles. 10.* *his destruction, and his lips are the snare*  
*12.* *of his soul*; that *the lips of a fool will*  
*Prov. 13. 3.* *swallow up himself, and he that openeth*  
*4. 24.* *wide his lips shall have destruction*;  
 where-

wherefore *put away from ye a froward* Ser. 14.  
*mouth, and perverse lips put far from ye.* ~~~~~

Learn, by sparing your tongues, to spare your souls, and by forbearing to heap up words, to forbear also to heap up *wrath against the day of wrath.* Which that I may the more effectually persuade you to do, I shall proceed now, in the

*Second* place, to represent to you the great wisdom of *refraining* your lips, of considering before you speak, and avoiding all rash and unadvis'd talk. And this, I hope, will abundantly appear, from the consideration of these following particulars.

*First*, That this is a sure way to gain us a reputation, and make us pass for wise men in the world. Men are very apt to judge of our discretion by our words, and to measure our understandings, not by the length, but by the seasonableness and solidness of our discourses. If we carelessly let fly at every thing which presents it self to us, whether we understand it or no, as all great talkers do, we shall soon betray our own ignorance; and the breath which we spend in talking, will only serve to blow away our credit, and procure us the ignominious name of *prating fools.*

But



Ser. 14. But if we are careful to refrain our lips  
 from speaking of those things which we  
 do not understand, and from saying no more  
 of those we do, than what is seasonable  
 and has been before-hand well weighed  
 and consider'd by us ; we shall in all prob-  
 ability be esteem'd as oracles of wisdom,  
 and, because we discover no ignorance,  
 shall be thought to have none. *Even a*  
 Prov. 17. *fool, as Solomon tell us, when he holdeth*  
 18. *his peace, is counted wise, and he that*  
*shutteth his lips is esteem'd a man of un-*  
*derstanding ; that is, a man of very ordi-*  
*nary parts and abilities, who can so far*  
*govern his tongue, as to keep it from tel-*  
*ling tales of its own ignorance and folly,*  
*may pass well enough in the world for a*  
*man of competent wit and understanding.*  
 And I may safely take up the reverse of  
 the wise man's observation, and say, *Even*  
*a man of parts,* when he is talking hastily,  
 is counted a fool, and he who opens his  
 mouth so wide, as to let every word that  
 first comes, fly out of it, is deservedly e-  
 stee'm'd a man of no understanding.

If then we have any love for reputation,  
 that great and just darling of mankind, let  
 us shew it, by taking care of our tongues,  
 which

which, if not kept within due bounds, will Ser. 14.  
as certainly blast our own credit as our  
neighbours. Let us remember, as *Plu-* De garru-  
*tarch* well adviseth, *how much more ad-* lirate.  
*mir'd, how far they are reputed to excel*  
*in prudence, who deliver their minds in*  
*few words, roundly, home and sententi-*  
*ous, and contract a great deal of sense*  
*within a small compass of speech, than*  
*such as fly out into voluminous language,*  
*and suffer their tongues to run before their*  
*wits.* And, remembring this, let us en-  
deavour to speak cautiously and slowly,  
and then we shall be sure to speak wisely.  
Then shall our *wisdom be known by our*  
*speech, and our learning by the words of*  
*our mouths,* as it is expressed, *Ecclus.*  
iv. 24.

*Secondly,* This will be a sure means of  
avoiding many occasions of giving offence  
to our neighbours, and drawing down mis-  
chiefs thereby upon our own heads.

Every man, who is given to talk much  
and rashly, must necessarily be subject to  
many, more especially these three very  
great inconveniencies.

*First,* The perpetual noise and clamour  
of his tongue will be offensive to all com-

Ser. 14. pany, and render him unacceptable and  
 ~~~~~ burdensome wheresoever he comes. Men  
 do not care to have talk impos'd upon
 them, whether they will or no, especially
 the talk of such shallow-brain'd and empty
 creatures, as these vain babblers generally
 are. And hence it comes to pass, as *Plu-*
tarch observes, that they can never meet
 with any that are willing either to eat, or
 drink, or lodge with them in the same
 room; but, as far as they can, all men de-
 cline and avoid their company, and those
 who cannot, grow soon sick and weary
 of it.

Secondly, His hastiness in talking will
 very often be an occasion of his overlook-
 ing all the laws of good breeding, and of-
 fending against the nicest punctilioes of
 honour: of his dropping rude and unman-
 nerly expressions, and either saying such
 things as he should not, or at least not
 saying them as he should. And how dis-
 mal the effects of such unwary expressions
 may prove, it is no hard matter to fore-
 see. How apt they are to stir our passions
 and exasperate our rage we all feel: how
 many unhappy quarrels they have been the
 occasion of we all know: and in what a
 tragi-

tragical scene of blood and murther they Ser. 14.
 are but too likely to end, our own sad
 experience may convince us, which has of-
 ten shew'd us, that the flames of men's
 wrath thus enkindled, would be extinguish-
 ed no other way, than by the blood of
 him who first enkindled them. So true is
 the wise man's observation, that a *fool's* Prov. 18.
lips enter into contention, and his mouth ^{6.}
calleth for strokes; and that a *prating* Prov. 10.
fool shall fall, or, as it may be translated, ^{10.}
shall be beaten.

Nay, it is well, if the petulancy of such
 a man's tongue do not, by some impru-
 dence or other, affront and provoke even
 publick authority it self, and, by so doing,
 pull down vengeance upon him, in a no
 less terrible, but much more justifiable
 way than the former.

Lastly, His incurable itch of talking will
 necessitate him, even for the support of
 his trade, to turn tale-bearer; to pick up
 or make stories of his neighbours; nay,
 and as it is but too commonly seen, of his
 betters and his governors, which he may
 carry from one to another, whether true
 or false he matters not, provided they be
 but long enough to fill up the empty spa-

Ser. 14. ces of his discourse, and to entertain his
 ~~~~~ company with, when he is put to't for  
 something else to say. And how directly  
 contrary such an employment as this is to  
 God's exprefs commands, how odious and  
 contemptible it will render any man, how  
 much real injury it will do to others, and  
 how much sure mischief it will bring upon  
 his own head, a small acquaintance with

*Levit. 19. 16.* scripture will easily inform us. *Thou shalt  
 not go up and down, faith God, as a tale-  
 bearer among thy people ; much less shalt*

*Exod. 23. 28.* *thou revile the gods, or judges, or curse*

*Prov. 18. 8. 16. 28.* *the ruler of thy people. The words of a  
 tale-bearer are as wounds, faith Solomon,  
 and they go down into the innermost part  
 of the belly ; they sow strife, and very*

*Eccles. 28. 14.* *often separate chief friends. And the  
 back-biting tongue hath pull'd down strong  
 cities, and overthrowen the houses of great  
 men, faith the son of Sirach. And if so,  
 surely the tale-bearer himself, who gives  
 these deadly wounds, the back-biter who  
 doth these mighty mischiefs, must needs be  
 abhor'd and detested both by God and men,  
 as the very bane of friendship, and plague of  
 society. And accordingly we find how  
 dismally the poor prophet *Jeremiah* be-  
 moans*



moans himself, upon account of his having Ser. 14.  
to do with a people, that were addicted to  
these sins, and what terrible judgments he  
denounceth upon them, from God, for the  
sake of them. *Oh that I had in the wil- Jerem. 9.  
derness a lodging place of way-faring men,* <sup>2, 3, 4.</sup>  
*saith he, that I might leave my people and*  
*go from them; for they be all an assem-*  
*bly of treacherous men. And they bend*  
*their tongue, like their bow, for lies, but*  
*they are not valiant for the truth upon*  
*the earth. Take ye heed every one of his*  
*neighbour, and trust ye not in any bro-*  
*ther, for every brother will utterly sup-*  
*plant, and every neighbour will walk*  
*with slanders. And they will deceive e-*  
*very one his neighbour, and will not speak*  
*truth: they have taught their tongues to*  
*speak lies, and weary themselves to com-*  
*mit iniquity. Therefore thus saith the*  
*Lord, Behold I will melt them and try*  
*them; shall not I visit for these things,*  
*saith the Lord, shall not my soul be a-*  
*veng'd on such a nation as this?*

For these and such like reasons doubt-  
less it is, that we are so often told in scrip-  
ture, that *a man full of words shall not* Ps. 140.  
*prosper upon the earth; that a fool's voice* <sup>11.</sup>  
*shall not be heard.* Prov. 12.

438      *The Danger of talking much,*

Ser. 14. *is known by multitude of words.* And to  
 Eccus. 9. the same purpose, by the *son of Sirach*, he  
 18. *that is rash in his talk shall be hated,*  
*and a man who useth many words shall be*  
*abhor'd.*

But now the man, who is careful to *re-*  
*frain his lips*, will be sure to abstain from  
 giving any offence of this nature: his great  
 cautiousness in speaking will keep him from  
 provoking any man, much more his gover-  
 nours, by any rash and indecent expressi-  
 ons; and the little pleasure which he takes  
 in talking, merely *for talking's sake*, will  
 be a sufficient security, both against his  
 worrying company with his tongue, and  
 his carrying about false and impertinent  
 stories. He can hold his tongue without  
 pain, and therefore will not stir it at the  
 expence of his justice and charity, of his  
 own peace and his brother's reputation; he  
 can manage it with prudence, and, if so,  
 without offence. And then surely this man  
 may reasonably hope to live in peace and  
 quiet, since, as the *son of Sirach* tells us,

Eccus. 19. *He that can rule his tongue shall live*  
 6. *without strife, and he that hateth babbling*  
*shall have less evil*, nay, and not only so,  
 but to be the delight of all good company,  
 and

and the joy of his neighbourhood, and, according to the Psalmist's rule, to *live long, and see good days*, because *he can keep his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile.* Ser. 14.

*Thirdly*, He who talks thus carefully will, in all probability, talk so, as to have no reason to be concern'd or troubled afterwards for what he has said; I do not mean on a religious, but civil account. There is nothing in the world more common, than for men, who are guilty of rash talking, to say such things, in the heat and intemperance of their discourse, as, in coolness and sedateness of temper, they heartily wish unsaid. How often may we hear them upbraiding themselves of folly, upon this score? How often cursing those tongues, which have brought so much *shame*, and *confusion of face* upon them? Oh! what would they give, that they had not, by the rashness of their tongues, disoblig'd this and t'other friend or benefactor: that they had not divulged such and such a secret: that they had not unawares discover'd their minds so freely, in this or that point: or that they had not betray'd their own ignorance so plentifully, as they

Ser. 14. did, by talking so very much of things, which they did so very little understand, &c. Thus do they frequently lash themselves, with the remembrance of their own folly, and reap that sorrow and remorse, which are the natural fruit of all rashness.

But we hear nothing of all this from the cautious talker: he had an eye to his own peace, in all his discourses, and therefore Ps. 112. 5. took care continually, *so to order his words, with discretion*, that they might not be the seeds of a future repentance. He can reflect upon them with pleasure, because he spoke them with prudence, and rejoice in having said them, because he sees no reason to wish them unsaid.

*Fourthly*, He, who is thus careful to *refrain his lips*, takes a very likely course to avoid all sins of the tongue whatsoever. For, as multiplying words is a sure way to multiply sins, and talking rashly to talk wickedly; so to be sparing of our words, and to speak with caution and deliberation, is our only sure way not to offend, or at least to offend but seldom with our tongues. *David* knew no other way to Ps. 39. 2. *keep his tongue from offending*, but by *keeping*

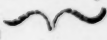
keeping his mouth, as it were with a bri- Ser. 14.  
dle; and the son of Sirach was so sensi-  
ble, that this was the only way to pre-  
serve him from sinning with his mouth,  
that he passionately cryeth out: *Who shall Eccles. 22.  
set a watch before my mouth, and a seal<sup>27</sup>  
of wisdom upon my lips, that I fall not  
suddenly by them, and that my tongue  
destroy me not?*

I am willing to believe that men do not formally design to transgress their duty, and affront God, in every sin of their tongues; nay, I hope that many, I would be glad to say most of them, are chiefly owing to heedlessness, and an habit of talking without thinking. To what else can we impute those light and trifling conversations; those silly, yet often not harmless, reflections upon things which are quite out of our province, and which we understand nothing of; those improbable lies and ridiculous stories of our neighbours; those senseless oaths and unprofitable execrations, which do so much abound among us? Nay, and is it not but too too often seen, that this very heedlessness and incogitancy dare to thrust themselves along with us, even into the house of God, and  
let



Ser. 14. let loose our tongues, impertinently to  
 ~~~~~ run and prattle there, where sure, if any  
 where, we ought to be *all attention* and
all reverence, all humble thoughtfulness,
 and *all devotion* ?

So that many of the sins of the tongue, it is plain, are owing to the want of, and might easily be prevented by, a very moderate degree of precaution and consideration. And, as for those more wilful and malicious ones, such as prophane jestings upon *scripture* and *sacred* things, spreading of false reports, on purpose to do mischief, either to the publick or private persons, and, in general, all lewd and immoral discourses, design'd to *fly in the face* of *virtue and religion*: these all appear, at first sight, to be so very unfair and unjust, base and dishonourable, contrary to all the laws of good nature and good breeding, of God and man, and so highly injurious and offensive to both, so little likely to bring any reputation or profit to those that use them, in this world, and so sure to cut them off from all hopes of happiness in another; that one would think it impossible, that any man of tolerable sense and breeding, that allows him-

himself time to think before he speaks, Ser. 14. could possibly accustom himself to be  guilty of these sins.

Hear therefore, O ye children, the discipline of the mouth; he that keepeth it, shall never be taken in his lips. But above all, keep thy mouth with all keeping, when thou goest into the house of God: and let not that tongue which was given thee chiefly for this end, that thou mightest honour God with it, in praying and giving praise to him, be made an instrument of dishonouring him, and that too, in his own house, the house of prayer.

Fifthly and lastly, To talk thus cautiously is a sure way to make our account short and easy, against the day of judgment. There is a day most certainly coming (how soon, God alone knows) when we shall be call'd upon to give an account of every idle word that we have spoken, that is, tho' not of every unnecessary one, yet, I fear, of every rash and mischievous one; and when by our words, as our Saviour himself has assur'd us, we must either stand or fall, be justified or ^{Matt. 12.} condemn'd, eternally justified or eternally _{36, 37.} condemn'd.

And,

Ser. 14. And, Lord ! what a dreadful account must that poor wretch then needs give in, who has been all his life long talking, as if there had been *no laws* for the tongue *at all* ? How *numberless* will the idle words of such a man be, how *severe* a *sentence* will they bring upon him ? Good God ! with what amazement, horror and confusion, will he then look back upon his past life, when he shall find too plainly, that *damnation* and *idle* words must go together, and that, all the while he thought himself playing with his tongue, he was really talking himself into *everlasting torments* ?

But, on the contrary, with what calmness and serenity of mind, on this account, will that man appear before the great tribunal, whose conscience will give him this testimony, that the words of his life have been *few* and *discreet*, *inoffensive* to God, *unhurtful* to man, and consequently such as he shall be justified by, before the *righteous Judge of all things* ?

If then, to behave our selves so, as to establish our reputation, so as to gain the love and friendship of our brethren, and secure the peace of our own minds, in this life :

life: if so, as to *avoid sin*, and to *prepare* Ser. 14.
for judgment in the next, may be account-
 ed wisdom; then he, who is thus care-
 ful to *refrain his lips*, may be justly e-
 steem'd one of the *wisest* of men.

And now, the only use which I shall make of all that has been said, shall be to persuade men not to *multiply words without knowledge*, but to think a great deal more, and talk a great deal less, than they generally do; and to beg of them, that as they would not allow in themselves, so neither would they encourage in others this vain *talkative humour*, which, as has been largely shew'd, is attended with such a long train of evil consequences. I know very well that it is the custom of too many, to judge of men's parts by their backwardness or forwardness in talking: to call those, who are pert and bold in speech, witty and ingenious; and, on the contrary, those who are slow and modest in it, dull and foolish. But surely these men must have very sorry parts themselves, who can call a man a fool, for being afraid of talking away his reputation, his ease, the peace of his mind, and his hope of everlasting happiness: or a wit, for venturing
 to

Ser. 14. to throw away all these together, a great deal faster than other people.

But I would not willingly be misunderstood. My design is not to tie men up wholly from talking, but only to teach them to talk wisely: not to spoil conversation, but to make it innocent and improving. I am so far from thinking men oblig'd to speak nothing but *apophthegms* and *wise sentences* in company, and never to drop one word, but what is absolutely necessary, that I readily grant, that religion allows and approves, in its proper season, all such diverting and facetious discourse, as hurts no body, neither God, our neighbours, nor our own souls. All my desire is, that yours may be such, and that, in order to its being so, you would be careful not to talk so much and rashly, as to make it impossible for you to talk innocently.

Much less is it my design to make men so over-cautious of speaking, as that they should be afraid of speaking, even there, where it is seasonable and becoming them, nay and their indispensable duty to speak. It is not my business to teach men how to talk cunningly and sily, and with entire regard

regard only to their worldly interests (that Ser. 14. is a lesson not proper to be taught in God's house, but the devil's) but to persuade them, if I may be so happy, to speak always both honestly and wisely. He, who is not free to speak his Mind (whatsoever dangers may threaten him for so doing) when his duty requires it of him, is so far from being a good christian, or a good man, that he doth not deserve the very name of a man. But then, even where men are most obliged to speak, they are obliged also duly to weigh and consider before-hand, both the matter and manner of what they speak. And they may depend upon it, that prudence, truly so called, as it never has, so it never can, hurt any good cause : but rashness, on the contrary, even when accompanied with honest intentions, and cover'd over with the specious name of zeal, has spoiled many an one. Nay, perhaps there are no cases, in which we are obliged to be more heedful of what we say, than those, in which we are most indispensably oblig'd to speak; for these are very often cases, in which those, to whom we speak, are not much dispos'd to hearken to what we say, and therefore will

Ser. 14. will be glad of any handle from our imprudence, either as to the matter or manner of it, to slight and disregard it.

Permit me to leave one caution more with you, and I have done ; and that is, that ye would be more especially careful not to be *rash with your mouths*, when you happen to be engag'd in discoursing upon subjects of more than ordinary moment and importance ; such as, for instance, the *venerable mysteries* of our religion, the *characters* of our governors, the *conduct* of our superiors, &c. These are nice and sacred subjects, by no means rashly or irreverently to be treated ; here we shall be in great danger, without our utmost care, of lashing out into things, which are too high for us : here our mistakes and misrepresentations will be of the most fatal and mischievous consequence : here our duty exacts from us all the respect, tenderness and wariness, all the humility, modesty and charity, that we can possibly put on ; and therefore here, if ever, ought we to *lay our hands upon our mouths*, and to consider, that *God is an hearer of the tongue, and will not acquit a blasphemer of his words* ; that the ear
of

of jealousy heareth all things, and the noise of murmurings is not hid. Therefore beware of murmuring, which is unprofitable, and refrain your tongue from backbiting; for there is no word so secret, that shall go for nought: and the mouth that believeth, slayeth the soul. Ser. 14.

To conclude all; since the danger of talking much and rashly, is so evidently great, and the wisdom and advantage of a contrary practice so many ways apparent, let us be entreated to hearken to the wise son of Sirach. Learn before thou speakest. Weigh thy words in a balance, and make a door and bar for thy mouth: beware thou slide not by it. Let thy speech be short, comprehending much in few words, be as one that knoweth, and yet holdeth his tongue. Eccles. 18. 19. 32. 3.



S E R M O N XV.

Preach'd before the QUEEN,
Nov. 1702, at St. James's.

The Friendship of the World En-
mity with God.

J A M E S iv. 4.

*Know ye not that the friendship of
the world is enmity with God.
Whosoever therefore will be a friend
of the world, is the enemy of God.*



ver. 17.

T. James having at the latter part of the foregoing chapter, represented to us the excellent and amiable properties and qualities of the christian religion ; as that it is, *first*
pure,

The Friendship of the World, &c. 451

pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to Ser. 15.
be entreated, full of mercy and good ~
fruits, without partiality and without

hypocrisy : proceeds at the beginning of
this chapter, to set before us on the con-
trary, the base and odious properties and
qualities of *lust* and *vice* ; as that they
are *the cause of wars and fightings a-* ver. 1.
mongst us. That they make us greedy of

the things of this world, and envious at
another's enjoyment of them, to that de-
gree, as even to quarrel, fight and kill one
another for them ; and yet at the same
time, hinder us from obtaining them, ei-
ther by keeping us from praying to God
for them, which is a necessary means for,
and condition of our attainment of them, ver. 2.

or which is as bad, or worse, render all
our prayers to God for them ineffectual,
by causing us to seek them for a wrong
end, namely, *that we may consume them* ver. 3.
upon our lusts. And then in the words of

my text, he both gives us a plain account
how it comes to pass, that men of their
carnal and worldly temper, are thus plagu'd
with vexations and disappointments : and
likewise useth the most powerful argument
possible, to reclaim them from *their friend-*

Ser. 15. *Ship with the world: Ye adulterers*
 ~~~~~  
 ver. 4. *and adulteresses.* (Ye who having in the  
 most sacred and solemn manner vow'd,  
 and, as it were, married your selves to  
 God and Christ in baptism, do yet, after  
 the fashion of adulterers, break this mar-  
 riage-covenant, by giving yourselves up to  
 the love of another, viz. the world) *Know*  
*ye not that the friendship of the world*  
*is enmity with God?* Do ye not consider,  
 for so the word is used, *Luke ii. 49. and*  
*Acts xxiii. 5.* that by your false and adul-  
 terous love of the world, ye infallibly make  
 yourselves the enemies of God; even of  
 that God which has declared *that there*  
*shall be no peace to his enemies, and that*  
*their prayers are an abomination to him?*  
 And how then can you in any reason hope  
 to be easy in your lives, or successful in  
 your prayers? And why then will you be  
 so desperately mad and foolish, as even in  
 spite of this most certain and most dread-  
 ful consequence of becoming God's ene-  
 mies, still to persevere in this *friendship*  
*of the world.*

These words seeming at first sight to be  
 a very hard saying, and apt, if too strict-  
 ly interpreted, to move scruples in good  
 men;

men; and on the other hand, if too loosely, Ser. 15. to encourage sensuality and a love of the world in bad ones. I shall, for the more cautious explication of them, and for the making them in their true sense effectual to the ends for which they were design'd, treat of them in this following manner.

*First*, I will enquire what we are to understand here by the *friendship of the world*.

*Secondly*, Lay down some marks or signs, by which we may certainly know, whether we are such *friends of the world* or no, as are here condemn'd.

*Thirdly*, Shew for what reasons such a *friendship of the world* must needs be *enmity with God*. And,

*Lastly*, Earnestly exhort you not to entertain such a *friendship with the world*, as must needs make you the *enemies of God*.

*First*, I am to enquire what we are to understand here by the *friendship of the world*. And for our clearer proceeding in this enquiry, we shall do well to consider,

*First*, In what sense the word *world* is here taken.

Ser. 15. *Secondly*, What degree of *friendship with the world* is here condemn'd.

*First*, In what sense the word *world* is to be here taken. Now there are three senses in which this word is used in scripture, any one of which may seem proper and pertinent enough in this place; and every one of which, by some commentator or other of good note, are here applied. As,

*First*, The *world* is often put to signify the wicked men of the world; whether unbelievers, or believers, of evil and  
 1 Cor. 11. 32. profligate lives. So St. Paul tells the *Corinthians*, that they are judged of the Lord; that is, visited with temporal afflictions here, that they might not at the general judgment be *condemned with the world*; that is, to be sure, with the wicked of all sorts. And so, wherever the world is said not to know our Saviour, and not to be able to *receive the Spirit of truth*, and to rejoice at our Saviour's departure, and to hate him and his disciples, and to bring tribulation upon them: there it constantly signifieth wicked worldly minded men; whose minds the God of this world hath so blinded, that the  
 light

light of the glorious gospel cannot shine Ser. 15.  
unto them ; or at least, in whom the love  
of the world hath so far choaked the power  
of it, that it can bring forth no fruit to  
perfection.

*Secondly*, It is sometimes put to justify the vicious actions and customs of the world. And in this sense, St. *Paul* is suppos'd to use it, *Rom. xii. 2.* where he commands us not to be *conform'd to this world*. And St. *James*, chap. i. ver. 27. where reckoning up some of the main and principal properties of pure and undefiled religion, he mentions this at last, as the crown of all, *the keeping our selves unspotted from the world*: that is, doubtless, as it is more plainly express'd, *Titus ii. 12. From worldly lusts*; and 2 *Pet. ii. 20. From the pollutions that are in the world*.

*Lastly*, It is likewise us'd to signify the things of the world, and the enjoyment of them, *viz.* the riches, honours and pleasures of it ; and in one word, every thing belonging to it, which men are apt to be pleas'd with. Thus *Matt. xvi. 26. What will it profit a man*, saith our Saviour, *if he gain the whole world*, or the enjoyment of all the things of the world that are

Ser. 15. desirable, *and lose his own soul*? And thus,  
 ~~~~~ Gal. vi. 14. *The world is crucified unto me, faith St. Paul, and I unto the world*; that is, the things of this world are to me like dead things, which have no charms or virtue in them; and I also am like one dead, as to the enjoyment of them.

Now tho', as I observ'd before, any of these three senses may, without the least absurdity, be apply'd to the words before us; because in every one of these senses, there is a *friendship with the world*, which is blame-worthy, and *enmity with God*; yet, because it is plain, that in the verses immediately preceding my text, where St. James speaks of *lusting and not having, asking and not receiving*, &c. he had respect to the things of the world: and because it is also plain, that to a love of the things of this world, most of our mistakes about, and neglects of God and religion are owing; nay, and that from a love of the world in this sense, the love of it in the other two, namely, of the wicked men, and wicked customs of it, doth most commonly arise; and that therefore this chiefly deserves to be exposed and argued against: I shall, without the least scruple;

scruple ; nay, even most willingly and readily, suppose, that by the *world* here, the things of the world are to be understood; and accordingly proceed to enquire. Ser. 15.

Secondly, What degree of love or friendship to the things of the world, is here condemn'd. For, that every degree of love is not, seems to be very evident from hence ; that the things of this world are, like all other God's creatures, in their own nature good, and consequently deserving to be lov'd. That they are good to us, necessary supports to, and grateful comforts of, our beings, and never in the least hurtful to them, but through our own faults. That we are created with natural appetites for, and inclinations and affections towards, them ; and that they are stiled in scripture *the good gifts of God*, and said to be bestow'd by him as favours and rewards on his best and most faithful servants ; and therefore ought (as he doth not only allow, but command) even in honour to him, to be *rejoyc'd in, and receiv'd with thanksgiving* ; that is, in other words, to be lov'd and esteem'd by us.

But then we must take care to love them with a just and well proportion'd love ;

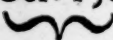
458. *The Friendship of the World*

Ser. 15. love; not to set them up in our affections
 ~~~~~ above things of infinitely greater value in  
 themselves, and infinitely more amiable  
 upon account of their usefulness and bene-  
 ficialness to us; not to suffer them so much  
 as to aim at any degree of parity or equal-  
 ity with these in our affections: nay, and  
 even not to set them up above themselves;  
 I mean, not to love and value them more  
 than they really deserve, more than their  
 own nature, and the relations which  
 they bear to us, will answer for. But to  
 speak more plainly and distinctly to the  
 point: we then are such friends of the  
 things of the world, as St. *James* con-  
 demns.

*First*, When we love them more than  
 we do God, our Saviour, religion, and our  
 souls, or indeed with any degree of near-  
 ness or equality to them. We must love  
 the Lord our God, *with all our hearts, and  
 all our minds, and all our souls*; and be  
 so far from loving the pleasures of this  
 world more than him, that we must have  
 nothing upon earth in comparison of him.  
 We must not love *father or mother, houses  
 or lands*; nay, or our *very lives* more  
 than Christ; *we must count all things*  
 but

*but dross and dung for the knowledge of* Ser. 15.  
*him* : we must love God's commandments  
*above gold ; yea, above fine gold :* and  
tho' the whole world should be offered us  
in exchange for our souls, we must love  
and value them too well to accept of the  
offer. To say all at once, we must not  
love any earthly thing whatsoever, in com-  
parison of the least part of our duty, whe-  
ther it be to God or man, or any worldly  
enjoyment, like the enjoyments of religion,  
inward peace, hope, joy, and complacen-  
cy of mind here, and everlasting happiness  
in heaven hereafter.

*Secondly,* When we love them more  
(tho' vastly short of God, our Saviour,  
our souls, our religion, and the spiritual  
rewards of it, if such a thing could pos-  
sibly be suppos'd) than they in themselves  
really deserve to be belov'd ; and for other  
ends and purposes than God has design'd  
them for : when we love them as our own,  
as bringing mighty delights and satisfac-  
tions with them, as being certain, perma-  
nent, and durable goods ; when really they  
depend entirely upon the will of another,  
have no great matter in them when we  
come to enjoy them, are not so much as  
lent

Ser. 15.  lent us for any certain time, but are always fluttering upon the wing, and ready to be gone, and very often fly quite away from us: when we love them as settlements at our home, not as conveniencies in our passage; love them for a surfeit, not for a sober meal; love them for ministering to our vices, lusts and passions, not to our virtues, necessities and tranquillity of mind; and to sum up all in the apostle's words, *love to abuse, more than to use them; love them as things which shall endure for ever, and not as things the fashion of which passeth away.*

These two general heads will, I believe, take in all instances whatsoever of an unlawful, unreasonable, and consequently blameable love of the things of this world: it being impossible to love them too much, so long as we love all things that are more amiable, proportionably more; and so long as we measure out our love to them according to their own natural goodness, and true usefulness to us; and confine and limit it to God's own ends and purposes. Let us therefore but be able to assure our selves, that we do thus love the things of this world, and then we shall

shall have no reason to fear upon this account. And whether we do so or no, we shall soon know when I come, Ser. 15.

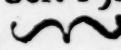
*Secondly*, To lay down some marks or signs by which we may certainly know, whether we are such *friends of the world*, or no, as St. *James* here condemneth. And what should these marks or signs be, but the influences and effects which this principle of worldly love, if it be predominant in us, will habitually have upon our minds and actions? For the surest way of judging of a tree is, by its constant fruit; and we shall never want fruit enough to judge of this tree by; which is no dull, sluggish, unactive and barren principle within us; but on the contrary, a very brisk, lively, active and fruitful one.

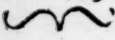
If therefore, in the general, we find our thoughts and affections wholly or chiefly taken up with the things of this world: if the main bent of all our studies and endeavours tends this way: if for the sake of these things, we attempt such difficulties, undergo such labours, run such hazards, as we would not for the sake of any thing else whatsoever, not even for God's and our own soul's sake, venture upon: if our  
hearts



Ser. 15. hearts are rather set upon making our  
~~~~~ selves, or our children, rich and great, than  
wise and good: if we strive very much to
get places of honour or profit, and very
little, or not at all, to do the good which
we may do in them, and discharge the
trusts belonging to them: if we sneak, and
and soon suffer our selves to give way, in
the cause of God and religion; and let this
man's greatness, and t'other man's wealth,
this secular inconvenience, and that con-
sideration of worldly gain, keep us from
doing our duty, or frighten us from op-
posing wickedness, in a way proper for us,
tho' in never such high places; when at
the same time, we can be bold as lions
for the world, and vigourously oppose any
power whatsoever, even the highest upon
earth, that shall dare to touch our honours,
our estates, our liberties, or properties. If
this, or any like this, be our case, there
is no room left to dispute what principle
we are govern'd by; but the world which
so plainly shews its authority over us,
must have us. But, to be more particular,

If we can be prevailed upon, for any
worldly interest or gratification whatso-
ever, wilfully to omit any one duty of re-
ligion,

ligion, or commit any one sin. If for Ser. 15.
the sake of what we call good company, 
business or diversion, we absent our selves
from the publick worship of God, in the
great congregation of his people: or even
fail of our morning and evening sacri-
fice of family and closet-prayer and thankf-
giving to him. If, to preserve or advance
an interest in a great man, we flatter him,
drink with him, lye for him, become com-
panions with, or excuse, commend, or as-
sist him, in any other of his vices. If
we let the affairs of the world make
us do our duty to God very lamely and im-
perfectly, cut short our religious exercises,
mingle with, and prophane all our devo-
tions, dissipate our compos'd and serious
thoughts, spoil our attention to God's word,
render our behaviour in his house irreve-
rent and unseemly, and consequently scan-
dalous and offensive to others; nay, and
apt to discompose and disturb their devo-
tion too, as well as our own; and do not
do our utmost to prevent and hinder this,
but rather cherish and encourage it. If
we do not go with as much pleasure,
at least, to the service of God, and the
practice of our duty, as to the business and
diversions

Ser. 15.  diversions of the world ; to the church, as to the play-house ; to our closets, as to our chests and coffers ; to a work of justice or charity, as to a good bargain or good purchase. If we love the praise of men more than the praise of God ; study more, and take more pains to please them than him ; and even rather to please, than profit them : if we act ourselves more with regard to popularity and worldly applause, than to honour, justice, and the rules of our duty ; and advise others, rather to what we are sure they like, and will thank and reward us for, than what is truly for God's glory, and their own and others real good. If in doubtful cases between God and the world, we do not always surely incline to God's side : as if, supposing, not allowing it to be doubtful, whether it be lawful to play or game on the Lord's day, yet we do not presently conclude against this : because God's honour is herein concern'd ; and, in that case, we should always be resolv'd to take the surest side. If we chuse rather to abate on God's part than the world's : if we rob him of part of his day, which is but one in seven, to spend
in

in visitings, in airings, in trifling conver- Ser. 15.
 sations, and in merry meetings, rather than
 lose a moment of the other six, which we
 look upon entirely dedicated to the world,
 for any of these purposes : if, in a time
 of publick taxes, when we have occasion
 to retrench and contract our expences, we
 rather diminish and take off from our cha-
 rity, our kindness to God's ministers, our
 contributions towards religious designs ;
 than from our outward equipage, fine fur-
 niture, rich cloaths, gay liveries, variety
 of costly wines, and luxurious dishes, &c.
 If we are never contented with such
 things as we have, tho' competent, and
 perhaps abundantly sufficient for all the
 true ends and conveniencies of life ; but
 are perpetually carking and craving after
 more ; and that too to please our ambi-
 tion, gratify our pride, tickle our vanity,
 humour our covetousness, inflame our lusts,
 strengthen our power of oppressing, &c.
 If we put our trust in riches, or in any
 arm of flesh : if we make gold our hope,
 or say to the fine gold, *Thou art my con-
 fidence* : if we believe that it can deliver
 from the hand of death, or profit in the
 day of wrath : if we reckon securely upon

Ser. 15. the enjoyment of it, or of any other worldly good, and bid our *souls take their ease, eat, drink, and be merry*, as having a certain *store laid up for many years* : if we forget God our Saviour, and put our trust in any thing but him. If we dread the thoughts of leaving this present world, and cling fast to it, and do all that we can to persuade ourselves, that we shall live in it, and enjoy it as long as the eldest man that ever we knew : if instead of striving to wean our selves from it, and become mortify'd to it, we unnecessarily run into the way of temptation ; encrease our business, multiply our acquaintance, hunt out new pleasures, lay new and long projects, and even unnaturally strive and force our selves to seem young to our selves (for other people cannot be so easily deceiv'd, but stand by and see, and laugh at this our folly) that so we may not feel the natural warnings, nor hear the necessary calls of death by old age. If, *lastly*, in the very inmost secrets of our souls, we do but so much as wish, that God had made our happiness to consist more in the enjoyment of the things of this world,

world, and less in the enjoyment of him-
self, and all spiritual goods. Ser. 15.

In these, and all such like cases, there appears such a plain byass and inclination to the things of the world: such a partial and very often entire preference of them to the concerns of God and religion: such an unjust esteem and valuation of them; and such a preposterous designation of them, not only to other, but even to contrary ends, than those God design'd them for: that we are sure this must be such a love of the world as deserves to be condemn'd; and therefore, no doubt, such an one as St. *James* design'd here to condemn. And, on the other hand, where we find the reverse of all this, we may be as sure that we are not under the influence of this, but a quite different principle, bringing forth much better fruits.

And now having given you such a large description of this principle of worldly love, in its true and genuine effects, you cannot sure but of your selves see in it,

Thirdly, Reasons in abundance, why it must needs be *enmity with God*.

You cannot but see how unreasonable, ill-proportion'd, and unjust a love this is.

H h 2

How

Ser. 15. How it robs God of, or at least pretends to come into competition with him for, the first place in our esteem and affections; which can be only due to the infinite perfections of his nature, and his infinite goodness and beneficence to us: how it absurdly prefers the creature to the Creator, shadows to substances, sense to reason, time to eternity, and mortal bodies to immortal souls: how it reflects upon God's honour, by thrusting him down, even beneath the vilest works of his own hands; and disparageth his wisdom, by crossing and perverting the designs of it.

You cannot but see, how vastly it is below the nature and dignity of man; who was made, and is fitted for much nobler enjoyments; who has a distinguishing principle within him, that sets him up far above the *beasts that perish*; and who therefore ought not, by degrading himself, to become like them; whose great glory it is, that he was created after God's own image, and has a rational and immortal soul, by which he is allied to the most excellent beings, even God himself, and made capable of the conversation and enjoyment of them; and whose supreme, I had almost

most said whose sole happiness (for surely Ser. 15. that which we generally call happiness in this life doth but ill deserve so significant a name) lieth not in this world, but in that which is to come.

You cannot but see how directly contrary and repugnant this is to the very nature and design of the christian religion; to our baptismal vow, wherein we renounce the world; to the example of our blessed Saviour, who declared both in word and deed, *that he was not of the world*; to our own constant professions of being subjects of *a kingdom that is not of this world*; to the great end of our Lord's coming, which was to save us from this evil world, to chuse us out of it, and to make *us a peculiar people to himself*, that should not *mind earthly things*; to his most plain and frequent commands, whereby we are indispensably enjoined, *not to love this world, or the things of it*, but *to deny our selves, to mortify our members, which are upon the earth, and to become heavenly minded, and seek those things which are above*; nay, and to the very threatnings and promises of the gospel too, which are full fraught with vengeance and

Ser. 15. destruction, for all those enemies of Christ's
 ~~~~~ crosses, *who mind earthly things* ; but with  
 glory, honour and power, for all such as  
*have their conversation in heaven, and*  
*look not at the things which are seen and*  
*are temporal, but at the things which*  
*are not seen, and are eternal.*

*Lastly*, You cannot but see, how plain-  
 ly this tends to wear away, and utter-  
 ly extirpate all sense and regard of God  
 and religion, out of our minds. How it  
 will make us, either totally omit, or at  
 least very carelessly and negligently, and  
 consequently unprofitably, perform those  
 duties of religion, which are the ordinary  
 means of growing in grace, and in the  
 knowledge of Christ Jesus ; such as praying  
 to God, hearing the word, partaking in  
 the blessed sacrament of our Lord's Sup-  
 per, &c. and how it will defile our souls,  
 and render us such impure temples, as the  
 Holy Spirit of God will not vouchsafe to  
 dwell in. How it exposeth us to manifold  
 and dangerous snares and temptations, and  
 by degrees brings us entirely under the  
 government of the God of this world ;  
 who, for the *kingdoms of the earth, and*  
*the glory of them*, will soon make us fall  
 down

*down and worship him.* How it brings Ser. 15. in fuel to our already over-hot lusts and appetites, strengthens our natural depravities, blinds the eyes of our understandings, makes at first excuses, and then pleas for almost all sorts of sins, and at last urgeth us on to bold and daring exploits in wickedness; and so makes good the apostle's character of it, *that it is the root of all evil.* How it takes away all relish of spiritual and heavenly things; and then puts us upon wishing that there were no God and religion, which are such dull and tasteless things to us, and soon after makes us believe according to our wishes, that there are none.

And seeing all this; how much injury and reproach is hereby done to God's infinite perfections; what ungrateful returns made to his loving kindness; how much his workmanship is disgrac'd; his good gifts abus'd; his excellent and glorious ends in our creation and redemption defeated; his Son's coming frustrated; his example of no effect; his commands violated; his threatnings slighted; his rewards not valued; our most solemn vows and professions to him broken; his ordinances



Ser. 15. neglected ; his Spirit done despitefully to ;  
and himself, as far as we are able, shut out  
of his own world. Seeing all this, we  
cannot help very plainly seeing one thing  
more, *viz.* that this love of the world  
must needs be *enmity with God*. And  
can there then possibly be any need that  
I should say any thing farther ?

*Lastly*, Earnestly to exhort you not to  
entertain such a friendship with the world.  
Is not the enmity of God argument enough  
to dissuade you from this, or indeed any  
thing else whatsoever ? Is it not all argu-  
ments put together in one ? Are not all  
possible evils, every thing that is to be  
fear'd and fled from, couch'd under it ?  
Much more in conjunction with the many  
arguments before mentioned, the unreason-  
ableness, the injustice, the baseness, the  
perfidiousness, the ingratitude, the folly,  
the danger of the thing, is it not sufficient ?  
I hope it is : I am sure it ought to be.  
And yet, because we find by experience,  
that men have need of all the arguments  
that we can furnish them with against the  
charms and bewitchery of the world ; I  
shall beg leave just to mention two more  
very considerable ones.

*First,*

*First*, That we can never live with any tolerable ease, quiet and satisfaction, so long as we are under the government of this principle of worldly love. Much less, Ser. 15.

*Secondly*, Can we die with any.

*First*, I say, We can never live with any tolerable ease, quiet and satisfaction, so long as we are under the government of this principle. There is so much uncertainty and unsatisfactoriness in all the things of this world, that those who place their chief hope and happiness in them, must necessarily very often meet with grievous balks and disappointments; must frequently miss of their promis'd enjoyment of them, such as they are; and evermore be deceiv'd in their expectations from them, which have represented them such as they are not. Besides, they will be apt to foment and encourage very troublesome and uneasy lusts and passions in us; ambition, pride, avarice, revenge, wantonness, &c. and put us upon such ways, for the gratification of these, as will rob us of our rest, health, liberty, reputation, and indeed every thing that is truly valuable, and may tend to make us live easily and comfortably here. To all which add the continual occasion, which

Ser. 15. which we shall have to bewail the loss of  
some part or other of those brittle and fugitive goods, and the fears of losing more; the care and anxiety in preserving; the desire and thirst of increasing, and the sorrow and trouble in parting with them; the want of the comforts of a good conscience, which God's enemies must always want; and the stings and lashes of a bad one, which they must ever and anon feel; and above all, that perpetual horror and dread of death, which will pursue us thro', and help mightily to embitter all the pleasures and enjoyments of this life; and we shall find very little room for peace and contentment. And never less, than,

*Secondly*, When we come to die, and need them most; then, then, miserable wretches that we are! all that we plac'd our happiness in, is going from us at one blow. Our dear, dear world has not so much as one smile, one glimpse of comfort left for us: nay, the very sight of this makes us miserable by putting us in mind of such pleasures as are now no more; and provoking us to long for, and pant after, such enjoyments as must never more  
be

be had. Too late we find the emptiness, Ser. 15. the vanity, the short-livedness of all worldly goods: too late we seek for bitter objects for our affections, which will now neither come to them; nor, if they would (habitually vitiated and deprav'd as they are!) could find agreeable entertainment with them. Too late we bethink ourselves, that we must give an account of our stewardships; too surely do we know ourselves to be altogether unprepar'd for such an account. Now the thoughts of our folly and our danger crowd thick upon us: we are confounded to think, that we have barter'd away heaven for the toys and trifles of this life; nay, and must take hell into the bargain also; and, that our misery may be compleat, one of the hottest places in it too. For so saith the scripture, *double unto them double, according to their works. How much they have glorified themselves, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give them.* These thoughts make our hearts fail us; now the fears of hell, properly speaking, are coming upon us; we feel more torment in every single moment, than we enjoy'd

Ser. 15. enjoy'd pleasure in the whole course of our lives. Our God has forsaken us; our consciences condemn us: we have had all *good things in this world*; and with despairing sighs, and floods of tears; with dreadful shrieks, and hopeless cries for mercy, we pass into the other.

O let me then beg of you, by all the honour, duty, love and gratitude which ye owe to God; by all that the blessed Jesus ever did or suffer'd for you; by your own vows and promises; by the dignity of your nature, and the dictates of your reason and conscience; by all your hopes of peace and happiness, both in life and in death, both here and hereafter; by your fears of being condemned with the world; and by your earnest expectations of being receiv'd into those blissful mansions which our Saviour Christ is gone to prepare for all such as are not of the world, but were *given to him by his father out of the world*. Let me by all and every of the powerful (and sure I need not fear to say invincible) arguments, prevail upon you, not to *set your affections upon this world, or the things of it*; not to make it your principal



principal care and concern, to lay up for *Ser. 15.*  
*your selves treasures upon earth, where*  
*moth and rust doth corrupt, and where*  
*thieves break through and steal; and*  
*to take thought for your life, what ye*  
*shall eat, and what ye shall drink, and*  
*wherewithal ye shall be cloathed, but to*  
*lay up for your selves treasures in hea-*  
*ven, where neither moth nor rust doth*  
*corrupt, and where thieves do not break*  
*through and steal: and to be sure, as*  
*you value your souls and their everlast-*  
*ing happiness, first, and above all other*  
*things, to seek the kingdom of God as*  
*your main end, and his righteousness as*  
*the true and only way to it. And that*  
*we may not fail of this, let us humbly*  
*have recourse to Almighty God for his*  
*assistance, in these excellent words of our*  
*holy church.*

*O Almighty God, who alone canst*  
*order the unruly wills and af-*  
*fections of sinful men: grant un-*  
*to thy people, that they may love*  
*the things which thou command-*  
*est, and desire that which thou*  
*dost*

478 *The Friendship of the World, &c.*

Ser. 15.  
~

*dost promise ; that so, among the  
sundry and manifold changes of  
the world, our hearts may sure-  
ly there be fix'd where true  
joys are to be found, through Je-  
sus Christ our Lord. Amen.*



S E R-



## S E R M O N XVI.

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Preach'd before the QUEEN,  
Nov. 1704, at St. James's.

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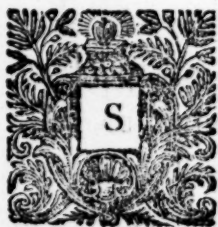
The Nature and Necessity of a  
Christian Conversation.

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PHILIPPIANS I. 27.

The former part of the verse.

*Only let your conversation be as it be-  
cometh the gospel of Christ.*



T. Paul having, in the fore-ver. 7,  
going part of this chapter, <sup>13, 14.</sup>  
mention'd *his bonds*, which  
he was in at *Rome* for the sake  
of the gospel, at the time of  
his writing this epistle; takes occasion from  
them

Ser. 16. them to declare his readiness to *magnifie*  
 ver. 20. *Christ in his body, whether it should be*  
*by life or death.* And the reason of this  
 his readiness he tells us was, because he  
 was sure to be a very great gainer either  
 way. If he should live on, he doubted  
 not but he should likewise go on in faith-  
 fully and industriously preaching the gos-  
 pel, as he had done, and, by this means,  
 in promoting his Master's honour, setting  
 forward the salvation of his brethren, and,  
 by so doing, amplifying and enlarging,  
 thro' God's grace and mercy, his own re-  
 ward in heaven. *To me to live is Christ,*  
 ver. 21,  
 22. *and if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit*  
*of my labour.* If he should die, he was  
 ready even then to comfort himself with  
 those blessed expectations and assurances  
 which he had, that, as soon as ever he  
 2 Cor. 5. 8. *should be absent from the body,* he should  
*be present with the Lord;* and that there  
 2 Tim 4. 8. *was laid up a crown of righteousness for*  
 ver. 21,  
 22, 23. *him in heaven. To me to die is gain.*  
 And, having such a glorious prospect on  
 both sides, he knows not what to wish  
 for; yet *what I shall choose, I wot not,*  
*for I am in a strait betwixt two;* on  
 the one side, *having a desire to depart,* to  
 get

get out of this troublesome world (trouble-Ser. 16.  
some to him, to be sure, who had suffer'd  
so many dreadful things from it) *and to* <sup>2 Cor. 11.  
23, &c.</sup> *be with Christ* his dear lov'd Lord, in the  
present possession of his joys, which was  
*far better*, infinitely most eligible *for him*,  
if he had regarded himself only; on the  
other side, being conscious to himself, that  
to *abide in the flesh*, to continue in this <sup>ver. 24.</sup>  
life, *was more needful for them*, his flock  
at *Philippi*, who would be more likely  
to make an happy proficiency in the faith  
of Christ, and to draw near to perfection  
in it, under him their spiritual Father and  
Guide, than any other. And this confide-  
ration it is, which turns the scale, and de-  
termineth the choice of our most charitable  
apostle (that true lover of souls indeed,  
that true pattern of a pastoral affection  
and concern for the flock of Christ, who  
for their sakes could be contented to put  
off the taking possession, even of *paradise*  
itself, for some time) nay, and even be-  
gets in him a firm perswasion, that for this  
reason God would be pleas'd to grant him  
a longer continuance among them: for this  
I take to be the sense of the words which  
follow. *And having this confidence*, that <sup>ver. 25.</sup>



Ser. 16. *to abide in the flesh, is more needful for you; I know, I believe, or am verily persuaded, that I shall abide and continue with you all, for your furtherance and joy of faith.* However, be this as it would, and as it should please God, to whom he entirely left it; yet one thing he tells them he must not forget to put them in mind of, a thing of the highest moment and importance, a thing of absolute necessity towards their eternal welfare. Nay, indeed the very one thing needful (a better lesson he could not possibly teach them if he were present with them; a better legacy he could not possibly bequeath to them, if he was never to see them any more) *Only let your conversation, the whole management and conduct of your lives, be as becomes, or is agreeable to, the gospel of Christ.*

Luke 10.  
42.

And as the apostle's very earnest manner, in which he recommends this thing to us in my text, is an argument of the very great weight and stress which he laid upon it; so likewise the vehemence with which he presseth it in some other of his epistles, is an evident proof of the same. As, in that to the *Ephesians* iv. 1. *I beseech*

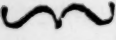
seech ye that you walk worthy of the vo-Ser. 16.  
cation wherewith ye are called. In that  
to the Colossians, i. 9, 10. *We do not  
cease to pray for you, that ye might walk  
worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.*  
And in the second to the Thessalonians ii.  
11, 12. *You know how we exhorted and  
comforted, and charg'd every one of you,  
(as a father doth his children) that ye  
would walk worthy of God, who hath  
called you unto his kingdom and glory.*

That therefore we may be sure rightly  
to understand, and faithfully to follow this  
important advice, I shall in my following  
discourse, endeavour to shew you,

*First*, When we may be truly said to  
have our *Conversation*, as becometh the  
gospel of Christ.

*Secondly*, What strict obligations we lie  
under to use our utmost care so to have  
our conversation.

*First*, When we may be truly said to have  
our *conversation*, as becometh the gospel  
of Christ. And the general answer to this  
question is very easy, viz. that then this  
may be truly said of us, when we lead  
such lives as the gospel of Christ requires  
that we should lead; such lives as are suit-

Ser. 16. able to those pure and refin'd precepts,  those noble and illustrious examples, those glorious and encouraging rewards which are there set before us, and offer'd to us. But general answers are apt to have but very little effect; I add therefore more particularly, that this may then, and only then, truly be said of us, when,

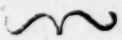
*First*, We use our utmost *care*, *pains* and *diligence*, to *perform* and to *avoid* every such thing, as God has, *any where*, commanded us to perform or to avoid. And,

*Secondly*, Do all this, in the *simplicity* and *sincerity* of our hearts, upon true christian principles, and with the entire concurrence of our minds, wills and affections. And,

*Thirdly*, Do it all to the *utmost perfection* that we are capable of, in full proportion to our endowments and abilities, and with an hearty desire and endeavour to grow and improve, every day more and more, in the knowledge and practice of our duty. And,

*Fourthly*, Are *constant* and *persevere* in doing this, throughout the whole course of our lives; or, at least, if at any time

we

we happen to *slip* or *fall*, do all that we Ser. 16.  
can to rise again, and recover our selves,   
by a *timely, sincere* and *effectual* repen-  
tance. And,

*Lastly*, After all our best endeavours  
to perform our duty, after all our best per-  
formances of it, ascribe the praise and glo-  
ry of them all to God, and entirely rely  
upon his *free grace and goodness in Christ*  
*Jesus*; and, not in the least upon our own  
merit, for his acceptance and rewarding  
of them.

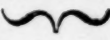
*First*, When we use our utmost *care*,  
*pains* and *diligence* to *perform* and to  
*avoid every* such thing, as God has, *any*  
*where*, commanded us to perform or a-  
void.

I say, our utmost *care, pains* and *dili-*  
*gence*, because the state of a christian in  
this life, is constantly represented in scrip-  
ture, as a state of great and continual dan-  
ger and temptation; a state of *war*, of  
*fighting* and *wrestling*, not only against  
our own lusts and passions, against the  
charms and allurements, the customs and  
fashions of a wicked world, and our own  
corrupt nature, which always takes part  
with them (which we cannot but know

Ser. 16. and feel to be formidable enemies enough)  
 but against *principalities, against powers,*  
*against the rulers of the darkness of this*  
*world, against spiritual wickedness in*  
*high places* ; and consequently a state,  
 where we have need to exert all our  
 strength, use all our prudence and caution,  
 be continually upon our guard, and sum-  
 mon all our forces together for our *de-*  
*fence, security and preservation.* And  
 hence it is, that we are so often exhorted  
 to *take heed, to watch, to be circumspect,*  
*to be sober, to be vigilant, to use all di-*  
*ligence, to labour, to strive, to fight, to*  
*resist, to resist unto blood, &c.* From all  
 which it is plain, that those can never  
 pretend to have their conversation *as be-*  
*cometh the gospel of Christ,* who will be  
 at none or very little thought or pains for  
 the service of God, and the salvation of  
 their souls ; much less can they, who by  
 their negligence and carelessness, their lazy-  
 ness and idleness, lay themselves open to  
 their enemies, and even invite the *world,*  
*the flesh, and the devil,* to make their af-  
 faults upon them, and carry them away  
 captive at their pleasure.

Again,



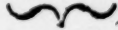
Again, I say, every such thing as God <sup>Ser. 16.</sup> hath commanded, because it is plain from  scripture, that *whosoever shall break one* <sup>Matt. 5.</sup> *of the least of God's commandments, shall* <sup>19.</sup> *be called the least in the kingdom of heaven*, that is, shall have no part there at all; and that, *whosoever shall keep the* <sup>Jam. 2.</sup> *whole law, and yet offend in one point,* <sup>10.</sup> *is guilty of all.* So that, according to the terms of the gospel, the very single wilful habit of any one plain sin, as whoring, drinking, swearing, &c. will be sufficient to damn a man, even tho' in other respects he may *keep the law*; nay, and perhaps have some very commendable qualities into the bargain; a thing which I heartily wish all, who *call themselves by the name of Christ*, would seriously consider.

*Lastly*, I say, as God has *any where* commanded, because God has us'd different ways of making known his will to mankind, all which we are oblig'd to attend to, and comply with. The gospel indeed is the last and most perfect manifestation of God's will to man, but doth by no means abolish, and render wholly useless, those which he had before. Reason, tho' it doth not shine by much so bright and clear as

Ser. 16. revelation, yet continues still to give us a very good and useful light, which we must take great care how we despise or neglect; and tho' all the commandments of the *Old Testament* do not now oblige us, as they did the *Jews*, to whom many of them were peculiar: Yet all the moral precepts of it, which have an eternal foundation in reason, and the nature of things, and which consequently all men are alike concern'd in, are still, and everlastingly will be, in as good force as ever. And therefore these

Matt. 5. 17. our Lord expressly tells us, he came not *to destroy, but to fulfil*. So that when any thing plainly appears to us, from the mere light of reason or the *Old Testament*, to be our duty, we are not, with some simple people, to question its authority, and despise it, as *carnal* and *out of date*, purely because it may happen not to be particularly and distinctly mention'd in the gospel (for, perhaps for this very reason, some duties were there omitted, or at least not so fully and explicitly mention'd, because they were very plain before, from reason or the *Old Testament*) but we are to look upon it to be as truly the will of

God

God as the gospel it self, and to obey it Ser. 16.  
accordingly. 

*Secondly*, When we do all this, in the *simplicity* and *sincerity* of our hearts, upon true christian principles, and with the entire concurrence of our minds, wills and affections: it is not enough to perform the duties of the christian religion, as the *Pharisees* did those of the law, Matt. 6. only to be *seen of men*, and to court their approbation and applause, to please our superiors, to establish a reputation, and to make our selves popular, to feed our *vanity* and *ostentation*, or to serve some other such worldly design or interest; no, they who are religious only from such principles, serve not God, but themselves, and, we are assur'd, must expect their *reward from men only*, but shall have none from their *Father which is in heaven*. But the good christian must act upon much higher and nobler principles, such as the scripture proposeth to us: a fear of the punishments, and hope of the rewards of a future state; an *unfeign'd* love of his brethren, and concern for their welfare in all things, more especially spiritual; a deep and humble sense of God's  
supreme

Ser. 16. supreme authority over all mankind, of  
 his infinite wisdom and goodness in his  
 government of them, and of his unspeak-  
 able condescension and loving-kindness, in  
 Luke 19. sending his Son *Christ Jesus to seek and*  
 10. *to save them*; and above all, a most ar-  
 dent love of him and our blessed Saviour,  
 and an earnest desire to become like them,  
 and to please them, and to promote their  
 honour and glory all over the world.

Neither will a bare external worship of  
 God, and performance of religious duties,  
 serve a christian's turn; but he must be care-  
 Rom. 6. ful to *obey from the heart, to worship in spi-*  
 17. *rit and in truth, to be renewed in the spi-*  
 John 4. *rit of his mind, to glorify God in his spirit,*  
 24. *or mind, and to be holy in that, as well as*  
 Ephes. 4. *in his body.* His inward man must always  
 23. go along with his outward: He must not  
 1 Cor. 6. only come to the publick worship of God,  
 20. 7. 34. but he must have his thoughts and affecti-  
 ons fix'd upon the business which he is  
 there employed in: he must not only pray,  
 but pray with zeal and fervency; not on-  
 ly hear the word, but hear it with reve-  
 rence and attention; not only receive the  
 communion of the body and blood of  
 Christ, but receive it with repentance,  
 faith,

faith and charity. He must *love* his brother, *not in word and in tongue only*, but *in deed and in truth*; and, as to himself, he must be *pure in heart*, in his very inmost thoughts and desires, as well as in his outward actions, or he will never *see God*. In fine, whatever he doth, he must do it *heartily, as unto the Lord, and not as unto men, knowing that of the Lord he shall receive his reward*.

*Thirdly*, When we do all this to the utmost perfection that we are capable of, in full proportion to our endowments and abilities, and with an hearty desire and endeavour to grow and improve every day more and more in the knowledge and practice of our duty. The christian religion doth not content itself only with our *doing no evil*, but with our *abstaining from all appearance of it*, every thing that may look like the least approach towards it; not barely with our *becoming good*, but with our *approving or trying things that are excellent*, and becoming, as far as we are able, *perfect; perfect to the very highest degree, even as our Father which is in heaven is perfect*. It requires us to do good, so to be *rich in good works*, to be



Ser. 16. *be fruitful in every sort of them*, and according to the several talents which we have received, to give God *his own* again *with usury*; as not to be *unfruitful* in the knowledge of Christ, not to *make vain* the grace of God: *so to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to abound more and more,* and to be daily *adding one grace and vertue to another*, that so at last we may be *perfect and entire, wanting nothing*.

And happy, happy would it be for us, if, according to these rules, we would be careful (not to draw as near as we can possibly suppose, with the utmost stretch of the law, we lawfully may to the borders of sin, which is the pitiful and unchristian policy of some men, and has ruin'd its thousands and its ten thousands: but) like true christians, true haters and abhorrrers of sin, to keep ourselves aloof, at a mighty distance from it. If, whatever we do in a religious way, we would do it *with all our might*, and be so far from thinking our selves good enough, as to be always aspiring and endeavouring after higher degrees of goodness and perfection.

If,

If those who are rich and great amongst us, would distinguish themselves by the extraordinary good which they do ; by becoming illustrious examples of piety and vertue, by being *ready to distribute, and willing to communicate out of their abundance,* and by using all their power and authority, *for the punishment of evil doers, and the praise of them that do well.* And, if all of us, from the highest to the lowest, would in our respective stations, and in proportion to our several abilities, do all that in us lieth, for the promoting the interest of religion, the honour of God, and the true happiness of mankind. Always remembring that we serve a master who expects to *reap* where he hath *sown*, and who, *where he hath given* much will require the more. Ser. 16.  
1 Tim. 6. 18.  
1 Pet. 2. 14.  
Luke 12. 48.

One thing more I would willingly add under this head, and that is, that as we are to improve in our performance of religious duties, so ought we likewise to improve in the principles upon which we perform them. The *terror of the Lord*, or a *respect to the recompence of reward*, are most commonly, and undoubtedly lawfully may be (else the scriptures would ne-

ver

Ser. 16. ver have propos'd them as such) the first motives or principles upon which men are persuaded to become religious. But then, a sense of God's goodness and infinite perfection, an entire love of him and our blessed Saviour, and a zealous desire to have their honour and glory advanc'd to the utmost, must afterwards take place in our hearts, and crown our righteousness. These are the noblest and most generous principles of religion, as having least of our selves, and most of God in them; and therefore these, we may be sure, will be most acceptable to God. And accordingly we find, that these were the chief principles upon which the apostles, and disciples, and first christians, and, which is more than all these, our blessed Lord himself, acted.

*Fourthly*, When we are constant and persevere in doing this thro' the whole course of our lives; or, at least, if at any time we happen to slip or fall, do all we can to rise again, and recover our selves by a *timely, sincere, and effectual* repentance. The conversation of a christian is not to be made up of *sudden heats and fits* of religion, frequently interrupted, and some-

sometimes wholly laid asleep for a very long time; nay, and too often chang'd into heats and fits of a quite contrary nature. He is not to *pray* one hour, and *swear* the next: to *come to church* on the Lord's day *morning*, and set in for *drinking* or *gaming* in the *afternoon*: to *give alms* to day, and *oppress* to morrow: to have a week of *retirement*, and another of *debauchery*; but he is to be *all of a piece*, and to carry on an *even* and a *steady* course of vertue throughout all the several stages, and in all the several instances of his whole life. He is to be *holy* as far as he is able, *as God is holy*, that is, to be <sup>1 Pet. 1. 15, 16.</sup> sure, with as little a mixture of sin and imperfection, as is possible to man: he is to *serve God in holiness and righteousness all the days of his life*: as soon as <sup>Luke 1. 75.</sup> he *names the name of Christ*, he is to <sup>2 Tim. 2. 19.</sup> *depart from all iniquity*, and he is to <sup>Rev. 2. 10.</sup> *continue faithful unto death*, that he may obtain *a crown of life*. This is to be his *first aim*, this he is sincerely to *design* and *labour after*.

But, because God foresaw that unhappy man would be apt to fail of this *continued righteousness*: he has therefore, out of

Ser. 16. of his infinite mercy and compassion towards us, *secondarily and by way of recovery* only, left open a place for *repentance*, that is, for our *return* to him, after we have *gone astray*, by an *heartly sorrow* for our sins past, and a *thorough change and amendment* of our whole conversation for the future. Never in the least intending that men should from hence take occasion wilfully and deliberately to enter into a course of sin, purely upon the prospect and encouragement of the privilege of repenting afterwards (no, this is a most notorious abuse of God's mercy, and finners had best take care that they do not too far provoke God by it) but chiefly that the surpriz'd and unwary, the thoughtless and unconsidering finners, the finners who have not offended so very presumptuously, and with such an *high hand*, might find shelter from divine vengeance, in this *city of refuge*. Provided always that they repent *in time*, before they are frighten'd into it by old age, sickness, or a death-bed (for of these the case is very doubtful, because their repentance seems to proceed rather from an entire regard to themselves, than any respect to God and his



his glory : and if so, they have great reason to doubt whether God will accept it) as also that they repent *sincerely*, not only to serve a present turn, till they have recovered this fit of sickness, that trouble or affliction, &c. which, God knows, is too commonly the case ; but with a full purpose to serve God, and to live to him all the remainder of their lives ; and *lastly*, that they do it *effectually*, so as to *bring forth fruits meet for repentance*, a constant succession of good works for a considerable time, which alone can evidence the *sincerity* and *efficacy* of their repentance. Ser. 16.

*Lastly*, When after all our best endeavours to do our duty, all our best performances of it, we ascribe the praise and glory of them all to God, and entirely rely upon his *free grace and goodness in Christ Jesus*, and not in the least upon our own *merits*, for his acceptance and rewarding of them : for what says the scripture? *When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do.* Luke 17. 10. And with great reason sure ; since it is God

Ser. 16. *that worketh in us, both to will and to do, according to his good pleasure; since*  
*Phil. 2. 13.*  
*2 Cor. 3. 5.* we are not sufficient of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God; and it is he that  
*Heb. 13. 21.* makes us perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, thro' Jesus  
*Romans 3. 4.* Christ: And, as to our reward, we know Chap-  
*ters.* who hath told us that it is not of debt,  
*Ephes. 2. 5, 8.* but of grace, and that by grace we are  
*Ephes. 1. 6.* sav'd thro' faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God; that we are accepted, not for own sakes, but in the  
*Titus 3. 7.* beloved, and, being justified by his grace, are made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

You see then, that the having our conversation as becometh the gospel of Christ, comprehendeth in it a vast deal; even all that care, pains and diligence; all that universal regard to God's commandments; all that sincerity and simplicity, both in principles and practice; all that zealous aim at, and endeavour after perfection, that abounding in good works, that just use and improvement of our respective talents; all that constancy and perseverance in doing good; all that seasonableness,  
hearti-

*heartiness* and *fruitfulness* in our repentance; and *lastly*, all that *humble-mindedness*, and *self-denial*, of ascribing all the praise of our best endeavours and performances to God, and relying wholly upon his goodness, *in Christ Jesus*, for the acceptance and rewarding of them, which are so often requir'd of christians in scripture.

And now perhaps, you will be apt to say, *Who is sufficient for all these things?* I answer, every christian (generally speaking) that is but as willing, as he will be made able: for tho' it is true indeed, that of our selves we are *weak* and *unable to do any good thing*, much less all these good things: yet at the same time it must be considered, that we are *strong in the Lord*, and *in the power of his might*, that his *grace* will be *sufficient for us*, his *strength made perfect in our weakness*, and that we shall be enabled to *do all things through Christ* which *strengtheneth us*. And upon these grounds we may be confident, with St. *Paul*, that God, who hath begun a good work in us, will also perfect it, even until, and in the day of *Jesus Christ's* coming to judgment.

Ser. 16. Let us then, without any more delays  
 or excuses, diligently attend to this important, this great, this necessary work; a work, without doing of which, we can never be easy in our minds here, never be happy hereafter: as will most plainly appear, as soon as I shall have laid before you,

*Secondly*, The strict obligations which we lie under *thus to have our conversation*. And surely these obligations must needs be very strict, since they bind us with all the force, that our *reason*, our *gratitude*, our *justice*, and our *interest* can give them.

*First*, Our reason, which, besides that it will tell us in the general, that all God's commands are to be obey'd by us, and must necessarily be agreeable to the highest reason, from which it is impossible for God, in the least, to swerve; so will it more particularly assure us, in respect of our *christian conversation*, that it is the conversation of a *man*, of a *reasonable creature*, most highly perfective of a *rational nature*, and directly tending to make us, in a very great degree, like to God himself, the supreme pattern of all *reason* and

and *perfection*. And that the restraints, Ser. 16. which the gospel lays upon us, are no more than are necessary, for the bringing under subjection our sensual lusts and appetites, which would otherwise be an intolerable shame and reproach to us; no more than are necessary to keep us from *setting our affections too much upon this world and the things of it*, and to prepare and dispose us for the enjoyment of another life, infinitely more agreeable to a rational nature than this, for ever and ever. And what then, in the name of reason, hath any man to object against this? Will he call himself a man, and will he not live like one? Would he be admir'd for his reason, and yet himself disregard and despise it? When God hath made him one of the noblest and uppermost ranks of beings, would he degrade himself, and make himself more vile, even *than the beasts that perish*; no, *I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies* Rom. 12. *of God, that you present your bodies a<sup>1</sup> living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.*

*Secondly, Our gratitude*; in the words of St. Paul, which I just now mention'd, you find the mercies of God urg'd as an



Ser. 16. argument to perswade men to lead holy and truly christian lives. And surely they must needs appear to be a very strong and powerful one, for this purpose, to any man that seriously considers how numberless and unspeakably great they have been towards us. After all that God has done for us, in our *creation, preservation*, and, above all, our *redemption*, by the death and passion of his *only begotten*, and most *dearly beloved* Son, whom he *spared not, but delivered up for us all*. After all this, we must have *hearts* harder than *adamant*, if we are not affected with a most *tender, deep and lasting* sense of this his *love* towards us. And this sense of his infinite love and kindness towards us, cannot but beget in us a most *ardent and intense love* towards him; and, naturally consequent upon this, a most earnest desire to make him all the returns of love that we can, by studying to please him in all things, to do his will before our own, and to *keep his commandments* whatsoever it may cost us.

Rom. 8.  
32.  
Zech. 7.  
12.

*Thirdly*, Our *justice*; which, as it doth exact from us an universal obedience to all God's commandments, as a most just debt

debt from all his creatures to him; so Ser. 16.  
 doth it more especially require at our hands  
 a performance of all those solemn vows  
 and promises, by which we have, over  
 and over, engag'd ourselves, to have our  
*conversation as becometh the gospel of*  
*Christ.* As in our *baptism*, our *confir-*  
*mation*, our *communion in the body and*  
*blood of Christ*, our ordinary *prayers*,  
*publick and private*, and more particu-  
 larly those which we have offered up to  
 God, in the day of *sickness* and *adversity*,  
 and at the times of publick *sorrow* and  
*humiliation* for sin. And can we possibly  
 be so foolish as to think that all these  
 vows and promises will stand for nothing?  
 Is it so very heinous and foul a crime to  
*lie* to man, and is it none at all to *lie*  
 to God, and to the Holy Ghost? Can we  
 be so ready to call one another to account  
 for *breach of promise*, and judge it a ne-  
 cessary piece of honour so to do? And can  
 we be so stupid as to believe, that God  
 alone is regardless of his honour, and takes  
 no notice whether men make good their  
 vows to him or no? No, let us not de-  
 ceive our selves; there is not one of all  
 these vows and promises, but what is no-

Ser. 16. *ted in God's book* ; not one that we shall  
 not be called to a strict account for, at the  
 last day. God is infinitely more jealous  
 of his honour, as he hath infinitely more  
 reason, than we can possibly be of ours ;  
 and therefore we may assure our selves  
 that he will not be mock'd by us, but, as  
 2 Cor. 8. 11. we have pretended to him a *readiness to*  
*will*, so he will expect from us, at our  
 utmost peril, a *performance* also.

*Lastly*, Our *interest* : and what is there  
 that we can possibly think of under this  
 head, that doth not powerfully plead for  
 such a *conversation as becometh the gos-*  
*pel of Christ* ? What is there that we can  
*in reason* wish for or desire, that this is not  
 the most ready and likely way to obtain  
 for us ?

Do we desire the outward enjoyments of  
 this world, *riches, honour, power, &c.*  
 what way so likely to obtain these, as by  
 the goodness of our lives, to engage *God*  
 on our side, who is the *giver* of them all ?  
 nay, and to engage men too, who will  
 hereby be invited, more than by any other  
 thing whatsoever, to *love* us, to *respect* us,  
 to *trust* us, to *serve* us, to *rejoice* in our

*pro-*

prosperity and advancement, and to help Ser. 16.  
towards it all they can. ~

Or do we, like wiser men, desire those inward enjoyments of contentment of mind, of fearlesness, of dangers, affliction, sickness, nay, even death itself, of a cheerful and merry heart, of a mind undisturbed by lusts and passions, of peace of conscience, and that yet more desirable peace of God, which passeth all understanding? Where, I beseech you are all these to be found, but in the life of a good christian? Where, but in the religion of him, who both had them all himself in the highest degree, and had power to bestow them on whomsoever he should please, and has actually promis'd them to all his faithful followers and disciples.

To say all at once, Do we desire to avoid everlasting misery, and to obtain everlasting happiness? There is but one way of doing this, and that is, by becoming *holy in all manner of conversation*, 1 Pet. 1. 15.  
*by perfecting holiness in the fear of God*, 2 Cor. 7. 1.  
and so render our selves *meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in* Colos. 1. 12.  
*light.*

There

Ser. 16. There will come a day, believe me  
 there will (but why do I say believe me?  
 believe your own *reason* and *consciences*,  
 believe the *wisest* and *holiest* of *men* or  
*angels*, nay, or even but believe *God* him-  
 self, who cannot possibly deceive you)  
 when God shall judge the world in righ-  
 teousness, and give to every man accord-  
 ing to his deeds; to them, who, by pa-  
 tient continuance in well-doing, have  
 sought for glory, honour, and immorta-  
 lity, eternal life: but to them who have  
 been contentious, and have not obey'd the  
 truth, but obeyed unrighteousness, indig-  
 nation, and wrath, tribulation and an-  
 guish upon every soul of them: a day,  
 when the blessed Saviour of the world  
 will no longer appear to be that mean  
 and inconsiderable person, that some men  
 would now make of him; but shall be  
 revealed from heaven, with his holy an-  
 gels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance  
 on them that knew not God, and obeyed  
 not his gospel: a day of darkness and  
 gloominess, of wrath and fierce anger, of  
 horror and amazement: when sinners  
 shall be afraid, and the hypocrites shall  
 be surpriz'd with fearfulness: when the  
 boldest

Acts 17.

31.

Rom. 2. 6,

7, 8, 9.

2 Thess. 1.

7, 8.



boldest and most daring sinner that ever Ser. 16.  
 liv'd, shall *sneak* and *crouch*, shall *weep*  
 and *wail*, shall be *confounded* and *hang*  
*down his head*, and be ready to give ten  
 thousand worlds, if he could be worth  
 them, for so much as one smile or glimpse  
 of mercy, from the once neglected and de-  
 spised Jesus : a day when there shall be  
*no respect of persons with God* ; but the  
*kings of the earth, and the great men,* Rev. 6. 15,  
*and the rich men, and the chief captains,* 16, 17.  
*and the mighty men, and the free-man,*  
 as well as the *bond-man*, shall *hide them-*  
*selves in the dens, and in the rocks of the*  
*mountains*, and shall say to the *mountains*  
*and rocks, fall on us, and hide us from*  
*the face of him that sitteth on the throne,*  
*and from the wrath of the Lamb* ; for  
 the great day of his wrath is come, and  
 who shall be able to stand ?

Be wise now therefore, O my brethren ; Psal. 2.  
 more especially, be instructed, ye that are  
*princes and judges of the earth* : ye, into  
 whose hands God has put such vast powers  
 and opportunities of being and doing good :  
 ye, who have such large accounts to make  
 out at the day of judgment : ye, whose  
 fall from the height of *temporal* grandeur  
 and

Ser. 16. and prosperity, into the lowest abyss of *eternal* wretchedness and misery, will make your case, if you should miscarry, much more intolerable than that of other men. O that ye would be persuaded to *serve the Lord with fear*, and to *rejoice unto him with reverence*: that ye would *kiss the son*, sincerely and entirely obey him, lest he be angry, and so ye perish from the right way: for, if his wrath be kindled, yea, but a little; much more, if it be kindled to that great degree, to which it most certainly will be at the great and terrible *day of wrath*: *blessed*, yea, for ever blessed, shall all those be, *that put their trust in him*.

S E R-



## S E R M O N XVII.

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Preach'd before the QUEEN,  
*March 1711, at St. James's.*

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Of the right Use, and Abuse, of  
the Things of this World.

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I COR. vii. 31.

*And they that use this world, as not  
abusing it, for the fashion of this  
world passeth away.*



Y the world, here the a-  
postle, no doubt, meant,  
what we commonly call,  
the *good things of this  
present life*, such as riches  
and sensual pleasures, which he had been  
just

Ser. 17. just mentioning in the two verses immediately preceding my text. And the *use* of these things he here plainly allows, but the *abuse* of them as plainly forbids.

I shall therefore make it my business, in my following discourse,

*First*, To enquire wherein the true *use*, and on the contrary, the *abuse* of these things doth consist.

*Secondly*, To offer several arguments, to persuade men, so to *use* these things, as not to *abuse* them: and more especially to insist upon that, here offer'd by the apostle for this purpose, *viz.* that *the fashion of this world passeth away*.

*First*, I am to enquire wherein the true *use*, and, on the contrary, the *abuse* of these things, doth consist. And here it may be certainly answered, in general, that the true *use* of these things doth consist in using them agreeably to their own nature, and the rules and prescriptions of our reason and religion about them: and the *abuse* of them in the contrary. I say, as well our reason and religion, as the nature of the things themselves: because, tho' this will go a great way, towards pointing

ing out to us the general ends and uses of *Ser. 17.*  
these things ; yet it cannot of itself be sufficient to teach us the particular manners and measures, in which we must use them : but these, depending partly on the reason of things, and partly on the positive will of God, must be learnt from reason and revelation, in conjunction with our experience of the nature of these things themselves. And these three, thus join'd together, will give us full directions as to this whole matter.

Come on then, and let us briefly consider, what are the several lessons, which these, thus jointly consulted, will teach us, upon this head. And these, if I mistake not, may be all compriz'd under the following particulars.

*First,* That we are not to use these things, as our supreme and ultimate good ; but as goods of a much inferior nature to those of the mind, and especially those of another life.

*Secondly,* That we are to use them, as mix'd, temporary, uncertain, weak, fading and perishing goods.

*Thirdly,* That we are to use them with great caution, discretion, moderation and temperance.

*Fourth-*



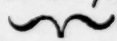
Ser. 17. *Fourthly*, That we are not to use them, in any such way, as will be hurtful to society; but, on the contrary, in all such ways, as will be most beneficial to it.

*Lastly*, That we are to use them so, as may make most for the honour of God.

*First*, That we are not to use these things, as our supreme and ultimate good, but as goods of a much inferiour nature to those of the mind, and especially those of another life. For, from our constant experience of these things, from our very enjoyment of them, even in the highest perfection which they are capable of, we plainly find, that no entire satisfaction is to be had in them. But still, after all our enjoyment of them, we long and hanker after something else; we feel an emptiness and craving within our selves, a capacity for enjoying, and a desire and hope of obtaining something much better and more satisfying.

And accordingly our reason and religion both assure us, that we are made for the enjoyment of much higher and nobler pleasures, than those of flesh and sense; and that we have a spiritual and immortal principle within us, which disdains to take

up

up with these, and aspires after such as Ser. 17.  
are much more refin'd and elevated. And,   
in consequence of this, they both strictly  
command us, not to love, not to *set our*  
*affections upon these* things: that is, not  
to love them supremely and ultimately,  
not to make them the principal, much less  
the only object of our *desire, hope, fear,*  
*trust, affections* and *endeavours*.

Nor is this all: but the very same ex-  
perience, reason and religion, which con-  
vince us, that these things are not to be  
aim'd at, pursued and acquiesc'd in by us,  
as our supreme and ultimate good, do  
likewise farther direct and encourage us  
to the prosecution and attainment of such  
goods, as are infinitely better; of the goods  
of the mind, of the pleasures which spring  
up in that, even at present, from our con-  
versing with spiritual and heavenly objects,  
from our doing good to men, from our ap-  
proving the conduct of our own lives,  
from the peace of our consciences, and  
from the joyous belief and expectation of  
an *exceeding* and *eternal weight of glory*,  
laid up for us in another life: with which  
pleasures the most exquisite sensual plea-  
sures are in no wise *worthy to be compa-*

Ser. 17. *red* ; but more especially, of the goods of *another life themselves*, in which alone is to be had that *fulness of joy*, which shall satisfy all our largest capacities and desires ; and in comparison of which all the things of this world, put together, are but mere *dross* and *dung*, as St. *Paul* elegantly expresseth it.

Then therefore, and only then, do we use the things of this world, as we ought, when we place them in our affections, regards and prosecutions, much, at a vast distance, behind the goods of the mind and of another life ; when our first and principal care and pains are for these last mentioned goods, and no more of them is bestow'd upon the other, than what can be well and most securely spar'd from these ; and, to use but few words, when we never suffer our love of the world, in the least, to hinder us, from *first seeking God's kingdom and righteousness*, from making it our constant exercise, to *keep a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man*, and from having *our conversation in heaven*, spending much of our time in contemplating upon, and preparing and fitting ourselves for the enjoyment of, the incomprehensible

prehensible happiness and glory of that Ser. 17.  
blissful place. ~

*Secondly*, That we are to use these things as mix'd, temporary, uncertain, weak, fading and perishing goods. As goods, which have a great deal of *dross* and *alloy* in them, are acquir'd with difficulty and pain, possess'd with fear and trouble, and enjoy'd with imperfection, weariness and disappointment: as goods, that, at the utmost, can last no longer than this life, and very rarely, scarce ever, last near so long: as goods, which are always fluttering and upon the wing, and may, for ought we know, at any time take their leaves of us, within a few years, or months, or weeks, or days, nay, or perhaps, this very day, or this very moment: as goods, which stand us in little stead, when we most want help, in the day of adversity, sickness and death: as goods, many of which wither and die, in the very use and enjoyment of them, some or other of which are daily decaying, waxing old, and bidding adieu to us, and all of which, by degrees, pall upon our palates, grow more and more insipid and distasteful, and infallibly expire with us, if not before us; and consequently as goods,

Ser. 17. which are not much to be valued and coveted, much less relied upon by us: as goods, which we should sit very loose and indifferent to, be always ready to part with, and able to be happy without: as goods, which we can relish the present pleasure of, without making it necessary to us, which we may contract a civil acquaintance, but, by no means, intimate friendship with.

*Thirdly*, That we are to use these things with great *caution, discretion, moderation and temperance.*

With *caution*; as well knowing that they are apt to steal and gain too much upon our affections, and are therefore to be watch'd, and kept at a due distance, and very often deny'd admittance to our embraces, even when there would be no other harm in admitting them, than the danger of their growing too familiar, dear, and necessary to us.

With *discretion*; as finding by experience, that they may prove hurtful and destructive, as well as innocent and comfortable, to us; and therefore carefully consulting with our reason and religion, and by their help distinguishing and judging, in what ways, and to what degrees, we may  
safely



safely and profitably indulge ourselves the use of them. Ser. 17.

With *moderation*; curbing and restraining our too fierce and eager appetites after these things, and keeping them within those bounds, which our well inform'd discretion shall chalk out for them. And,

*Lastly*, With *temperance*; actually applying the directions of our discretion, and the assistances of our moderation, in the use of these things; and thereby avoiding, on the one hand, all the inconveniencies and harms, and enjoying, on the other hand, all the true pleasures and advantages that can arise from them.

*Fourthly*, That we are not to use these things in any such way, as will be hurtful to society, but on the contrary, in all such ways, as will be most beneficial to it. Experience teacheth us, that we may use these things so, as to make them either very detrimental, or very beneficial to others. Our riches and power may equally be made instruments of tyranny, oppression and all sorts of mischief; or of relief, assistance, and all sorts of good, to our brethren: and we may partake of *marriage and the bed undefiled*, with profit to so-

Ser. 17. ciety, whilst effeminacy, fornication, adultery, and such like ways of using sensual pleasures, may prove its bane. And, this being so, our reason and religion, which prefer the interests of society to those of single persons, and even command single persons to be *careful of the things of others*, as well as their *own*, must necessarily so far limit and restrain our enjoyment of worldly goods, as to keep it from being hurtful, nay, as far as well may be, to make it profitable, to others in particular, and society in general. And accordingly we find, that religion doth explicity command us, to part with such portion of our riches, as either the good of the publick, or even private charity requires of us; to abridge our selves of many innocent enjoyments, for the sake of doing good, or avoiding offence and hurt to our brethren: to partake of the pleasures of sense in ways most convenient for society, and to use all our power, authority, and interest, for *relieving the oppressed, righting those that are wrong'd, doing justice, shewing mercy, &c.*

*Lastly*, That we are to use these things so, as may make most for the honour of  
 God

God. For, these being all his good gifts, Ser. 17.  
as both reason and religion assure us, no-  
thing can be more just, than that we  
should use them in such a manner, as may  
redound most to his glory ; and besides, he  
himself has expressly enjoyn'd, that *whether*  
*we eat or drink, or whatever other* of  
his good creatures we enjoy, we should *do*  
*all to the praise and glory of him.* Now,  
then we may be said to use these things  
most to his glory, when we acknowledge  
him to be the sole *Giver* and *Lord* of  
them, and accordingly pray, give thanks  
to, and depend upon, him alone for them,  
and exactly follow his rules and prescrip-  
tions about them ; when we use them,  
with humility, modesty, innocent cheer-  
fulness, and an entire resignation of them  
to his will ; when we avoid all such ex-  
cesses in our use of them, as may either  
dishonour our selves, and the image of God  
in us, or lessen and disparage these good  
gifts in the sight of men, and on the con-  
trary, always use them so, as may tend to  
give still greater lustre and beauty to that  
image of God, which he hath imprinted  
on us, and to make both our selves and o-  
thers more and more sensible of the bene-

Ser. 17. *f*icialness of them, and more and more abundant in thanksgivings to God for them; in one word, when we use them as persons, that must, e're it be long, give to God himself a severe account of our *use* of them: when we use them as helps, but never in the least as hindrances, to the performance of our duty, in any respect, but especially our more immediate duty to God, our private and publick prayers, our hearing and reading his word, our receiving the holy sacrament, our standing up manfully in defence of his truth, &c.

These are the rules, by which we are to govern our selves, in the *use* of the things of this world: and by impartially comparing our lives with which, we may certainly know, whether we do rightly *use* or *abuse* them. And, because I fear that, upon this comparison, we shall most of us be found guilty, in some degree or other, of *abusing* them, I shall use my best endeavours,

*Secondly,* To offer several arguments, earnestly to persuade men so to use these things, as not to abuse them; and more especially to insist upon that here offered by the apostle, for this purpose, *viz.*  
that

that *the fashion of these things passeth away*. And here, not to dwell upon the justice, decency, gratitude and publick-spiritedness of our thus doing, nor yet upon the agreeableness of it to our characters, both as men and christians, to the dignity of our nature, and the tenor of our high-calling, nay, and our own most solemn vows and professions : I shall, for the present, confine my self to a few select arguments, which I take to be most apt to make impression on the minds and affections of men ; and they are these which follow.

*First*, That thus to use the things of this world, has been ever esteem'd most reputable and honourable amongst men.

*Secondly*, That it is the best way, to have the true enjoyment of these things, to enjoy them with the greatest advantage to our selves.

*Thirdly*, That it is the best way to make us easy, under all the calamities of this life.

*Fourthly*, That it is the only way to prepare and fit us to bear, as we ought to do, the *passing away* of *these* things.

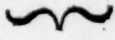
*Fifthly*,



Ser. 17. *Fifthly*, That it is the only way to  
 ~~~~~ make them turn to good account to us, in  
 another life.

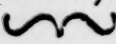
And, as I go along, I shall shew under each of these heads, that the *abusing* of these things is the direct contrary of all this.

First, That thus to use the things of this world, has been ever esteem'd most reputable and honourable amongst men. How great, how glorious, has that man always been in the vogue of mankind, who has liv'd above this world, and the things of it; has suffered them to minister to him, but never to master him; has readily post-pon'd and given them up to the much dearer interests of *truth, justice, charity, religion*, and the *publick good*, and has kept them under that perfect command and subjection to him, that he could at any time *accept, refuse, enjoy, forbear, possess, surrender*, all or any part of them, just as his duty should require, with the utmost indifference and equality of mind? Have not these been always thought the most shining parts in the illustrious characters, not only of *Gentile* heroes, but
 even

even of the *Jewish* and *Christian* worthies Ser. 17.
themselves? 

And, on the contrary, how low, how mean, how very despicable, has the character of those men always been, who have suffered themselves to be made slaves to this world, the riches, honours and pleasures of it: who have made their reason and religion truckle to these, and barter'd away their integrity for them: whose stinginess and selfishness has, as it were, cut them off, from the rest of mankind; or, which is worse, their proud and imperious tempers made them scourges, or their effeminacy and luxury, disgraces and burthens to them: in one word, whose earthly-mindedness has, on the one hand, continually cramp'd and restrain'd them from all truly great and generous actions, and, on the other hand, as continually prompted them to the most pitiful, base and fordid ones? How inconsiderable a figure do such men generally make, how are they despis'd, or, at best, hated and fear'd, while they live, how unpitied do they die, how do their name and memorial, either rot and perish, or, which is worse, stink, after their death?

Secondly,

Ser. 17. *Secondly*, That thus to use these things,  is the best way to have the true enjoyment of them, to enjoy them with the greatest advantage to ourselves. When we have first taken due care for those things, which are better, and of much greater importance to us, we then go with a clear and easy mind to the enjoyment of the things of this world, such as they are; when we expect no more from these things, than they really have in them, they may then both not displease us, by balking and disappointing us, and please us, by answering our expectations; when we enjoy them with *caution, discretion, moderation, and temperance*, they will both give the best relish in passing, and leave no sting behind them, when passed, but pure and unmix'd ease and cheerfulness both of mind and body will go along with them, and no shame, fear, satiety, pain, sickness, or other inconvenience of any sort will follow after them: when we do good to others, with them, as well as to our selves, this will double our joy of them: and, when we glorify God, in all possible ways, by our use of them, this will be a sure mean, both to have the applause of our own
minds

minds and the blessing of God added to Ser. 17. them, and both vastly to heighten the present pleasure of them, and likewise to secure from God a future increase and enlargement of them. ~

But when we act contrarily, in these several respects, then checks and misgivings of conscience: then vexations and disappointments: then insipidness or distastefulness, forc'd and imperfect mirth, surfeiting and nauseousness, pain, sickness, shame, and all manner of other inconvenience: then refusing to do good to our own souls, and troubling our own flesh: then the reproaches of our own minds, and the curse of God mingle with and imbitter all our present worldly enjoyments, and cut short, if not utterly destroy, our hope of future ones.

Thirdly, That thus to use these things is the best way to make us easy under all the calamities of this life. The world cannot much affright or hurt that man, whose affections are very loose and indifferent to it: who sets no great value upon its favours, and knows how to shelter himself from its frowns, in the peace and joy of his own conscience, in his trust on Divine

Ser. 17. vine Providence, and in his hope of that
~~~~~*exceeding and eternal weight of glory,*  
which he can make even the afflictions of  
this world help to work out for him.  
Come then the very worst that can come,  
this man has an *anchor of his soul sure  
and certain,* which will keep it tolerably  
steady and even, among all the tumblings  
and tossings of the waves of this life.

But what alas ! will that man do, under these circumstances, who both dotes upon the world, and knows not whither to go from it ? How will he be able to bear great and frequent crosses and disappointments, from that, in which he had plac'd his chief, if not his whole hope and confidence ; from which he expected his principal, if not total, comfort and satisfaction ? Or to what resting place shall his troubled soul betake itself from the storms of the world, which has all along expected its rest and protection from the world itself ? Oh this it is, which makes the afflictions of this present life to strike so deep into our hearts, and to wound and vex them so sorely, that we suffer the world to get an entire possession of them, and do not first take care to invite  
into



into them the *Holy Spirit* of God, and by Ser. 17.  
his powerful assistance keep the world  
out of them, *overcome* and *crucify* it to  
*our selves*, and *us* to it.

*Fourthly*, That thus to use these things  
is the only way to prepare and fit us to  
bear, as we ought, *the passing away of*  
*them*. St. Paul seems to have thought  
this single Argument, that *the fashion of*  
*this world passeth away*, sufficient to keep  
men from *abusing* the things of it; for,  
we see, he useth no other in this place.  
And therefore probably he meant a great  
deal by this, even all that can possibly be  
meant by it: and what that is, I shall  
briefly explain to you, and endeavour to  
represent the force of.

By *the fashion then of this world's pas-*  
*sing away*, he undoubtedly meant, that  
the whole scheme or state of this world,  
as well the things of this world, which  
make one part of this scheme, as our  
selves who make the other part, is conti-  
nually decaying, and shall, e're it be long,  
finally perish; that there will come a time,  
when the world, all the things and the  
wicked men in it, shall be *burnt up to-*  
*gether*, and that, in the mean while, both  
*we our selves and all our glory*, every  
thing

528      *Of the Right Use, and Abuse,*

Ser. 17. thing that we value most in this world,  
 shall be like a *vapour of smoak*, like the  
*flower of the field*, like a *garment eaten*  
*by a moth*, *uncertain and short-liv'd*;  
*daily withering, fading, consuming away*,  
 and at length suddenly gone, in a *moment*,  
 in the *twinkling of an eye*.

And oh! how effectually ought this  
 consideration to with-hold us, from *setting*  
*our hearts* upon the *things of this world*,  
 from growing very fond of them, and  
 placing much hope and confidence in them?  
 Vain man, whosoever thou art that dost  
 so, how wilt thou be able to bear the loss  
 of this or t'other enjoyment, of this *hope-*  
*ful Child*, of that *dear Wife of thy bo-*  
*som*, whom thou hast *lov'd as thine own*  
*soul*? What will become of the *covetous*  
*man*, when his *riches make to themselves*  
*wings, and fly away*? Where will the  
 hope of the sensual and voluptuous man be,  
 when, if nothing else, yet, at least, sick-  
 ness or old age, which usually come very  
 fast upon such, shall incapacitate him for  
 the enjoyment of sensual pleasures? Or,  
 where shall the *admirers of their own*  
*beauty* appear, when an *ill-natured dis-*  
*ease*, or as *ill-natured time*, shall have  
 chang'd

chang'd into ugliness and deformity? But, Ser. 17. above all (oh dreadful thought!) how miserable will the worldly-minded man be, how will his heart quite fail him, when death shall call him away from all his *worldly enjoyments* at once: when it shall rend and tear him, in spite of all his strugglings to the contrary, from *every dearest object* of his affections, and that too for *ever and ever*? In mere pity and mercy to ourselves therefore, if for no other consideration, let us enjoy the things of this life, with caution and moderation; that so we may not have continual occasions of fretting, vexing, and grieving for the loss of them, while we live; and that (which ought to be the great aim and endeavour of our whole lives) we may enjoy tolerable peace, contentment, and satisfaction of mind, when we come to dye.

'Tis true indeed, this Argument was something stronger, at the time when it was deliver'd by the apostle, with regard to the *Corinthians*, than it is with regard to us at present: because they were then in danger of immediate troubles and persecutions, and so probably of having *the things* of the world *taken from* them, or

Ser. 17. themselves from *the things* of the world, much sooner, than is likely with us. But then it must be consider'd, that the case is much the same with those among us, who are advanced in years, as it was with the *Corinthians*: for great part of their time is already past, and it cannot be long before the *state* of *this* world shall be quite gone with them. And tho' it may possibly be otherwise with those amongst us who are young and healthy: yet, forasmuch as this is very uncertain, and what only may be may likewise not be, it would be the highest folly and madness in us, in a case of this vast importance, to risk all upon this uncertainty, and by so doing, at least to live under a constant uneasiness, from the fear of what may happen, and perhaps to foreclose ourselves from being able to get the better of our *love of the world* hereafter, as we may at present possibly design.

Farther, I know not whether *St. Paul*, by this phrase of the *fashion* (or *state*) of *this world passing away*, did not design to intimate to us, that there would be *another state* of things, immediately subsequent to *this*, which should *not pass away* like

like this, but be *unchangeable* and ever-*lasting*. I am sure, in other places of his epistles, he very often couples these together, as in the 5th Chapter of 2 *Corinth*. *For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolv'd, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens;* and, in like manner, in the epistle to the *Hebrews*, *we have here no abiding city, but we seek one to come.* And, if this was his implicit meaning, as probably it was, it will double the force of his argument: for, as the transient and uncertain nature of the *things of this world*, and of our own continuance with them, is a very good reason, why we should not much settle our affections upon them, so the consideration of an *unchangeable* and *everlasting* state of things to come, after this life, is a very good reason, why we should chiefly raise our thoughts and affections to that state, and consequently slight and neglect our present state, in comparison of that. But, whether the apostle meant this here or no, it is so necessary an argument, to enforce what I have been all along exhorting you to, that I



Ser. 17. cannot dispense with my self, from endeavouring to urge it home upon you, as I propose to do under my next head, which is to shew,

*Lastly*, That thus to use the things of this world, is the only way to make them turn to a good account to us in another life. Another life, as I have been just hinting to you, is that, which we ought to have our thoughts and affections chiefly intent and fix'd upon; and *all the things* of *this* world, and the several ways of *using* them, are entirely to be estimated and judg'd, from their fitness or unfitness to promote our interests, as to this life to come. And they will, as we use them well or ill, have a very great influence, towards promoting or hindering this our main end.

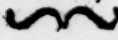
If we are careful in our use of them, they will lead us to the blessed Author of them, and fill us with thanks, praise, love, service, and obedience to him, for them. If we make them instruments of doing much good to our *Brethren*; if we use them in such a manner, as will render them true comforts of our present life, and yet never let them in the least incroach upon our duties, in order to a better life: then we shall certainly  
*make*

*make friends of them, that so, when we Ser. 17.  
fail they may receive us into everlasting  
habitations.* ~

But if, on the contrary, we use them so, as to *forget God who gave them*: so as to do little or no good, much more so, as to do hurt by them, to ourselves or others; and so, as to neglect better things, for the sake of them: then let us be assur'd, that *for all these things God will bring us into judgment.*

*Be not deceiv'd therefore my Brethren, God is not mock'd: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. Remember how Abraham's right use of the things of this world, with such an entire resignation of them to the will of God, that, at his command, he was most willing to have offer'd up his own son to him in sacrifice, was rewarded with paradise: and on the contrary, the rich man's abuse of them by infidelity, uncharitableness and luxurious living, punish'd with bell-fire.*

And

Ser. 17. And more especially let them remember  this, whom God hath bless'd with a more than ordinary share of the *good things* of *this* life. Their obligations to God are much greater than those of other men, their power of doing much larger; and their punishment, if they should *abuse* their worldly goods, will therefore be much sharper than that of other men too. And oh! what an intolerable change will be in their condition, to fall from the height and very top of prosperity, into the lowest abyfs of everlasting misery?

Give me leave, therefore, to *charge* such in the words of scripture, *not to glorifie themselves, not to be wanton and live deliciously and luxuriously upon earth: not to be high-minded, and to trust in uncertain riches; but to trust in the living God, who giveth them all things richly to enjoy; and to do good, to be rich in good works, to be ready to distribute, and willing to communicate, treasuring up for themselves a good foundation, against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.*

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